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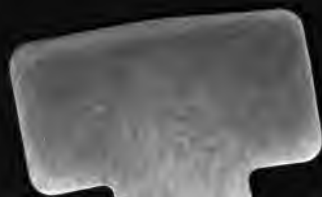
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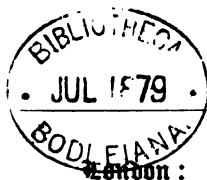
THE LAWYER'S NOSE:

A Story.

BY

EDMOND ABOUT.

TRANSLATED BY J. E. MAITLAND.

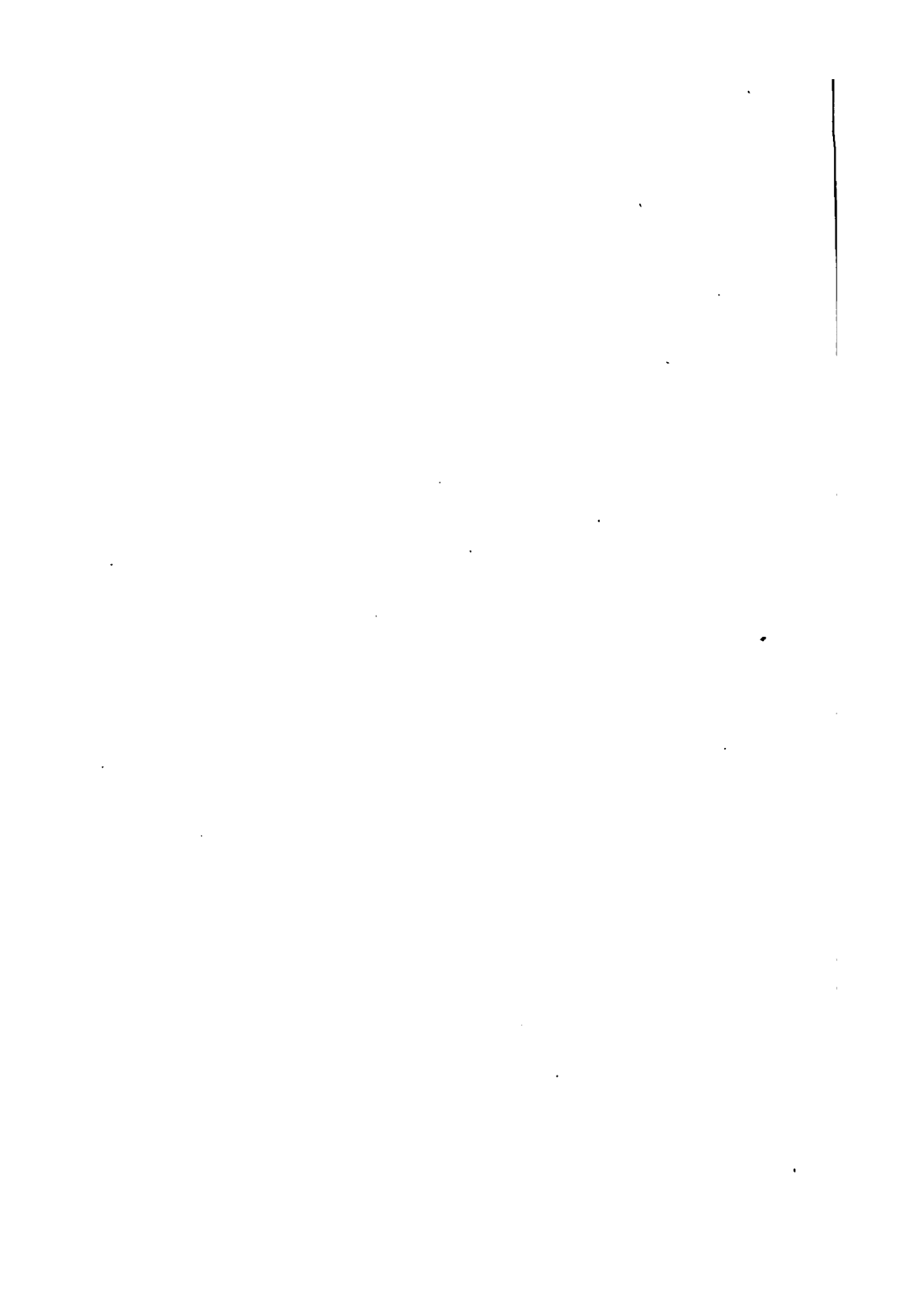


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THE LAWYER'S NOSE.

CHAPTER I.

THE EAST AND WEST AT VARIANCE—BLOOD FLOWS.

MAITRE L'AMBERT, before the fatal blow which obliged him to change the shape of his nose, was certainly the most brilliant lawyer in France. Let me describe him to you. At the time I speak of, he might perhaps be about thirty-two years of age, with a tall commanding figure, large well-shaped eyes, a Grecian forehead, and a profusion of beautiful light

hair. His nose—the first one I mean—was high and curved, like the beak of an eagle. You may believe me or not, when I tell you that his white cravat suited him to perfection, whether it was because he had worn it from his earliest youth, or that it was purchased at the very best emporium, I am not prepared to say—perhaps for both these reasons.

It is one thing to knot round your neck a handkerchief twisted like a cord, and another to tie with art and grace a white muslin cravat just sufficiently starched to allow the ends to hang gracefully right and left. A white cravat well chosen and well tied is a becoming thing, every lady will tell you; but it is not sufficient to know how to tie it, you must also know how to wear it; this is an affair of experience. Why does a white

cravat set so ill upon a mechanic on his wedding day? simply because he wears it then for the first time without any preliminary study.

One may accustom one's self in time to wear the most extravagant head-dress—a crown for instance. Buonaparte, the soldier, picked up one, one that a king of France had let fall on the Place Louis XV. He put it on his head, without a lesson from any one, and all Europe agreed in thinking it suited him admirably. Indeed, he set the fashion in his own family, and among his friends; every one about him wore a crown, or longed to do so!

But this extraordinary man was never able to grasp the art of tying his white cravat gracefully. The Vicomte de C—, author of

several poems, had studied diplomacy and the art of wearing his cravat with success.

He was at the review of our last army in 1815, a few days before the battle of Waterloo, and what do you suppose struck him most at this heroic gala, where the despairing enthusiasm of a great nation broke bounds—it was that Buonaparte's cravat was badly tied !

Few men in this pacific domain could compete with Maitre L'Ambert ; he had succeeded his father, and was a notary by birth-right. For more than two centuries this celebrated family had transmitted from father to son the office in the Rue de Verneuil, and with it the most distinguished clients of the Faubourg St. Germain.

It had always gone with the name, and within the last five or six years, had never on

an average been worth less than nine thousand a year. For two centuries and more, the elders of this family had always worn a white cravat, as naturally as the raven wears his black plumage, the drunkard his red nose, or the poet his thread-bare coat. Legitimate heir to a well-known name, and a considerable fortune, young Alfred L'Ambert had imbibed his good principles with his mother's milk. He duly despised all the political innovations which had been introduced into France since the catastrophe of 1789. In his eyes the French nation was composed of three classes only, the clergy, the nobility, and the *tiers état*, a highly respectable opinion which is still entertained by a small number of senators at the present day. He modestly took up a position in the first ranks of the

tiers état, not without inwardly cherishing some secret pretensions to low nobility. He held in sovereign contempt the mass of the French nation—that assemblage of peasants and mechanics that is called the people, or the vile multitude—and he came in contact with them as seldom as possible, out of regard for his charming person, which he cherished and loved passionately. Lithe, healthy, and vigorous as a pike from the river, he was convinced that those kind of people were the small fry, created by Providence expressly for the food and delectation of the said pike species.

A charming man on the whole, like most selfish people, he was much thought of at the Tribunal, at his club, in Chambers, at the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, and at

the fencing saloon. An adept with the small sword, a good drinker, a generous lover where his heart was concerned, a steady friend among men of his own set, a liberal creditor as long as he received punctually the interest of his money, refined in his tastes, fastidious in his dress, always scrupulously clean, constant in his attendance at St. Thomas d'Aquin on Sundays, and at the Opera on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays ; he would have been the most perfect gentleman of his day had it not been for his unfortunate shortsightedness, which obliged him to wear spectacles. Need I say they were gold ones, the lightest and most elegant that could be manufactured by the celebrated Matthew Luna, Quai des Orfèvres ?

He did not always make a habit of wearing

them, only when he was with a client at the office, and had deeds to read over. You may be sure that on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, when he entered the green-room of the opera house, he took good care to let his beautiful eyes be seen and admired. No disfiguring glasses were then allowed to obscure the brightness of his glance. He saw nothing himself, I am bound to confess, and often he bowed to a "walking lady" instead of to a "star," but he carried himself, for all that, with the air of an Alexander entering Babylon. For this reason the goddesses of the ballet, who were fond of giving nicknames to all their acquaintance, had dubbed him, "The Conqueror." A big, good-natured Turk, one of the secretaries at the Embassy, they called "Tranquil," a Councillor of State

was known as “Melancholy,” and a Secretary General of the Minister of —, who was very quick and noisy in his manners, was christened “Mr. Hurly-Burly.” This is why Elise Champagne, commonly known as Champagne II., had received the name of “Hurlina,” when she left the *corps de ballet* to be elevated to the rank of a subject.

My provincial readers, if indeed this history ever does get beyond the fortifications of Paris, will naturally pause here, and meditate for a few moments on the preceding paragraph. Methinks I hear at this distance the thousand and one questions which they are mentally asking the author—“What is the green-room, and the *corps de ballet*? What mean the stars of the opera, and the *coryphées*? And who are the subjects, and

the walking ladies?" Again, "How come those secretaries to be wandering about in such society, at the risk of catching a nickname? And a quiet, steady, well-principled man like M. L'Ambert, how does he find himself three times a week in the dancer's green-room, a place so totally opposed to the soberness of his profession, and so strongly at variance with his general demeanour?"

My dear friends, it is precisely because he was a man of good principles, quiet and steady, that he was there. The green-room in those days was a large square saloon, with faded red velvet benches placed all round it, and occupied by the wealthiest and most influential men in Paris. There one met not only Bankers, Councillors of State, and Secretaries General, but even Dukes, Princes,

Deputies, Prefects, and Senators entirely devoted to the temporal power of the Pope; the only element missing was the clergy. One met married ministers, and even those the most unmistakably married among them. When I say one met, it is not to be supposed that I ever did so, or that a poor devil of an author like me ever passed that magic circle. It was a minister who held the key of this abode of the Hesperides, and no one could enter without permission from his Excellency. The rivalries, the jealousies, the intrigues were worth seeing. Many a Cabinet had been overthrown, ostensibly under divers pretexts, but really because each statesman wanted to be cock of the walk in the green-room. But do not imagine for a moment that they were attracted here by the allure-

ments of forbidden pleasures ; no, rather was it an earnest desire for the encouragement of an art eminently aristocratic and political.

The flight of years has, perhaps, changed all this, for the adventures of Master Alfred L'Ambert date back a little further than the other day, though they do not go far into remote ages. For very good reasons I cannot specify the exact year when this ministerial servant exchanged his aquiline nose for a straight one ; that is why I say, as they do in fairy tales, "once upon a time," and you must content yourselves with fixing this great event somewhere between the burning of Troy by the Greeks and the destruction of the Summer Palace at Peking by the English, both very important eras in the history of European civilisation.

A contemporary and client of M. L'Ambert, the Marquis d'Ombreule, was saying one night at the Café Anglais—

“What distinguishes us from the common herd is our fanaticism for dancing. The lower orders are mad about music. They clap their hands off at Rossini's, Donizetti's, and Auber's operas ; it would really seem as if thousands of little notes made into a hodge-podge tickled pleasantly the palate of those sort of people. They are actually so absurd as to sing themselves with their coarse, hard voices, and the police allow them to meet in certain places for the purpose of murdering a few songs and operatic airs. Much good may it do them ; for my part, I never listen to an opera ; I look on. My venerable grandmother used to tell me that great ladies

in her day only went to the opera for the ballet. No encouragement was lacking on their part towards the male dancers, and now our turn has come we protect the ballet girls; *honi soit qui mal y pense!*

The little Duchess of Bietry, who was young, pretty and neglected, was weak enough to reproach her husband for having become an opera *habitué* after a certain fashion.

"Are you not ashamed," said she, "to leave me in my box with all your friends while you take yourself off, Heaven knows where?"

"Madam," replied he, "if one is on the look out for an embassy, is it not the proper thing to study politics?"

"Granted; but I should think there were better schools in Paris."

“Not at all. Learn, my dear child, that dancing and politics are twin sisters. To seek to please, to study the public, to fix your eye on the leader of the orchestra, to keep your countenance, to change the colour of your coat at any moment, to spring from one side to another and back again, to veer round suddenly, to fall on your feet, to smile with your eyes full of tears, equally sums up the tactics of dancing and politics ; is it not so ? ”

The Duchess smiled, forgave, and set up a lover !

Great noblemen like the Duke of Bietry, statesmen like the Baron of F——, millionaires like M. S——, and humble attorneys like the hero of this story, all elbow each other indiscriminately in the green-room, or

behind the scenes of a theatre. They are all on an equality, in the ignorant and simple eyes of the eighty little simpletons who constitute the *corps de ballet*. They call them "our subscribers," they smile on them "free gratis, for nothing," they chatter to them in nooks and corners, accept their bon-bons, nay, even their diamonds, as trifling attentions which in no way bind those who receive them.

The world, very wrongly, imagines that the opera is an easy-going pleasure market, or a school of profligacy. Virtuous maidens are to be found there in greater number than in any other theatre in Paris. And why? Because virtue happens to be a dearer article there than elsewhere.

It is interesting to study closely this little

world of young girls, nearly all issued from the lowest ranks of the people, whose talents or beauty may raise them in no time to any imaginable height.

Principally girls from fourteen to sixteen years of age, living on dry bread and sour apples in some sempstress' garret or porter's lodge; they come slip-shod to the theatre, in their checked gowns, and rush off to dress themselves furtively.

A quarter of an hour later down they come to the green-room, radiant, sparkling, decked out in silk, gauze, and flowers, all at the cost of the State; more brilliant than the fairies, angels, and houris of our dreams. Ministers and princes kiss their hands, and get their black coats whitened by the paint on their bare arms. Their ears are regaled with

madrigals, old and new, as the case may be, which they sometimes happen to understand. A few of them may possess some natural wit, and be able to converse agreeably; and they are in immense request.

The call-boy's bell summons the fairies to the theatre. The *habitués* follow them, detain and engross them behind the side scenes. Virtuous subscriber! who braves the risk of falling scenery, of dripping oil lamps, and the most varied effluvia, for the sake of hearing a rather hoarse little voice murmur, "By jingo, aint my poor feet aching?"

The curtain rises. The eighty queens of an hour frolic sportively under the gaze of an ardent public. Each one of them either sees, or imagines amongst the audience, two or three, or a dozen known or unknown adorers.

What a gala for them, till the fall of the curtain!

They are pretty, decked out, gazed at and admired, and have nothing to fear either from criticism or hisses.

- Midnight strikes, and a sudden transformation takes place, as in a fairy tale. Cinderella plods along by the side of her mother, or elder sister, and climbs the frugal heights of Batignolles or Montmartre. She limps a little, poor thing! and splashes her grey stockings. The excellent materfamilias who has concentrated all her hopes on the head of this child, inculcates, on the way, some wise precepts—

“Walk straight before you in life, my daughter, and do not fall; but if fate has predestined that a misfortune should happen

to you, take care to fall upon a rosewood bedstead."

These lessons of experience are not always followed. The heart occasionally makes itself heard. Male dancers have been known to marry ballet-girls, and one has heard of a young girl, as lovely as the Venus Anadyomene, saving up £40,000 worth of diamonds, to lead to the altar a clerk, at the salary of £40 a year.

Others leave to chance the care of their future destiny, and drive their families to despair. This one will wait till the 10th of April to dispose of her heart, because she has vowed to herself to be good till she is seventeen. That one has seen a protector, she fancies, but does not dare admit it, because she is afraid of the vengeance of a certain

chamber counsel, who has sworn to kill her and commit suicide afterwards, if she loves any other man than himself. He was joking, of course, but they take things most seriously in their little world.

They are as credulous as they are ignorant. Great girls of sixteen have been known to quarrel about the nobility of their origin, and the rank of their families.

"Just listen to this young lady!" said the biggest; "her mother's ear-rings are only silver, and those of my father are gold."

M. L'Ambert, after having hovered like a butterfly, from dark to fair, from fair to dark, at last fixed his admiring gaze upon a pretty brunette, with blue eyes.

Mdlle. Victorine Tompain was a very well-behaved young lady, as, indeed, they all are

at the opera, until they cease to be so. She had been well brought up, and was quite incapable of taking any important steps in life without first consulting her parents.

For six months she had listened, with varied feelings, alternately to the impassioned discourses of the handsome lawyer, and to that big Turk, Ayvaz Bey, whom they had nicknamed "Tranquil."

With each it had been a serious case, a question of her future; and she waited quietly, in a business-like way, to see which would make the best offer.

The Turk was a good fellow, honest and quiet, but somewhat timid; nevertheless, he spoke first and was accepted.

Every one had soon heard the news, every one except Alfred L'Ambert, who was at

Poitiers just then, attending the funeral of an uncle. When he returned to Paris and the opera, Mdlle. Tompain was wearing a beautiful bracelet of diamonds ; brilliants sparkled in her ears, and round her swan-like throat was suspended a heart, shining with the lustre of a thousand stars. The lawyer saw nothing of this ; as I before told you, he was short-sighted, and was too blind to perceive even the malicious smiles, with which his friends greeted him. He made his rounds, chatted, and was as brilliant as usual, waiting with the greatest impatience the end of the ballet, and the exit of the young girls. He had made all his calculations, and Mdlle. Tompain's future was decided, thanks to the death of that good uncle at Poitiers, who had died just at the right moment.

What they call in Paris the opera arcade is a labyrinth of wide or narrow galleries, light or dark, in different levels, which connect the Boulevard and the Rue Lepeltier, Rue Drouot, and the Rue Rossini; a long passage, partly uncovered, extends from the Rue Drouot to the Rue Lepeltier, running perpendicularly with the galleries Baromètre and Horloge.

It is at the lowest end of it, two steps from the Rue Drouot, that the private door of the theatre opens for the nightly entrance of the performers. Every other day at midnight, a mighty wave of three or four hundred persons rushes out noisily under the eye of Papa Monge, the guardian of this paradise; machinists, scene-shifters, choristers, dancers, walking ladies, tenors and soprani, authors, composers, managers and

subscribers, jostle each other in confusion. Some go over towards the Rue Drouot, the others mount the steps which lead through an open gallery to the Rue Lepeltier.

In the middle of this open passage, at the end of the gallery Du Baromètre, Alfred L'Ambert smoked his cigar and waited. Ten paces further on, a broad shouldered big man, with a red fez on his head, was sending out clouds of smoke from a cigarette of Turkish tobacco, thicker than his little finger. Twenty other idlers on the look out for some one or other, were sauntering or waiting near each one on his own hook, with no thought for his neighbour.

The singers passed by humming some operatic air, the footsore dancers limped away, and from time to time some female form, enveloped in black, grey, or brown,

slipped past the gaslights, utterly unrecognisable save to the eyes of love.

They meet, they talk, they disappear without any general leave-taking. Hist—a strange noise and an unusual tumult! Two slender shadows have passed by, two men have rushed forward, two cigars have come into proximity, loud voices are heard, as if in a sudden quarrel. The passers by congregate to the spot, but find no one; M. Alfred L'Ambert returns alone to his carriage which is waiting for him in the Boulevard. He shrugs his shoulders, looking mechanically at a card in his hand, on which has fallen a drop of blood—

“ Ayvaz Bey,

“ Secretary to the Turkish Embassy,

“ Rue des Grenalles St. Germain.”

“ No. 10.”

Listen to what this handsome lawyer is saying between his teeth—

“What an absurd affair! if I had only known that she had given any right to that beast of a Turk, for it surely was he: why in the name of fortune had I not got my spectacles on? It seems I gave him a blow on the nose? Yes, his card is stained, and my gloves too. Now I have got this Turk on my hands, all through my own stupidity, for I owe him no grudge, poor fellow. I don't care a rap for the girl; he has got her, let him keep her. Two sensible men don't want to cut each other's throats for Mdlle. Tompain, but this confounded blow has played the mischief.”

This is what he muttered between his teeth, his thirty-two teeth, whiter and sharper than

those of a young wolf. He sent his coachman home, and walked on slowly to the railway club. There he found two of his friends, and told the adventure to them. The old Marquis de Villemaurin, formerly a captain in the Royal Guard, and young Henry Steimbourg, a stockbroker, were both of opinion that the blow was most unlucky.





CHAPTER II.

THE CAT HUNT.

A TURKISH philosopher has said, "A blow of any kind is unpleasant, but a blow on the nose is the most unpleasant of all." The same deep thinker adds sensibly, in another chapter, "To strike an enemy before the woman he loves, is to strike him twice, thus assaulting both mind and body."

This was the reason that the usually placid Ayvaz Bey was foaming with rage, as he escorted Mdle. Tompain and her mother to the door of the apartments he had furnished for them. He bid them good-night, jumped

into a cab, and had himself driven, all bleeding as he was, to the house of his friend and colleague, Ahmed Bey.

The latter was sleeping, guarded by a faithful negro ; but if it is written, "on no account awake a friend who sleepeth," it is also written, "wake him, nevertheless, should danger menace thyself or him." Therefore, he was aroused. Ahmed was a tall Turk, about thirty-five, thin and slender, with long legs, very much bowed. He was an excellent fellow, and clever into the bargain ; there is some good in the Turkish nation, whatever people may say to the contrary. As soon as he saw his friend's bleeding face, he at once ordered a basin of cold water to be brought, for it is written, "Thou shalt not deliberate until thy blood stains are washed away ;

otherwise thy thoughts would be disturbed and impure."

Ayvaz was more quickly cleansed than calmed ; he related his misadventure in great anger. The negro, who was a third party to this confidence, immediately seized his kandjar, and offered to go and kill M. L'Ambert ! Ahmed Bey thanked him for his kind intentions, and kicked him out of the room.

"And now," said he to Ayvaz, "what shall we do?"

"That is simple enough," replied the other. "I shall cut off his nose to-morrow ; is not the law of requital, written in the Koran, 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, nose for nose?'"

His friend tried to show him that although the Koran undoubtedly was a very good book,

it was, nevertheless, a little ancient. The code of honour has changed since the time of Mahomet; besides, supposing they did follow out the letter of the law, Ayvaz would only be justified then in giving back a blow with his fist.

“What right would you have to deprive him of his nose? he has not cut yours off.”

But a young fellow who has just had his nasal organ considerably bruised under the eyes of his lady love, is not likely to listen to reason. Ayvaz insisted upon bloodshed, and Ahmed was at last obliged to give in.

“Let it be so,” said he; “we represent our country here in a foreign land, and we ought not to receive an insult without resenting it, and showing our courage. But

how can you fight a duel with M. L'Ambert, according to the usages of this country ; you, who have never handled a sword ? ”

“ What do I want with a sword ? I intend to cut off his nose, I tell you, and a sword would not be of much use for that purpose ! ”

“ If you were only a tolerably good hand with a pistol ? ”

“ Are you mad ? What do I want with a pistol to cut off this insolent fellow's nose ? I—yes—I have made up my mind ; go and find him, and arrange everything for a meeting to-morrow. We will fight with sabres ! ”

“ But, my poor fellow, what will you do with a sabre ? I don't doubt your courage, but you must allow that you are not a second Pons ! ”

“ What does that signify ? Go and tell

him that I expect him to place his nose at my disposal to-morrow morning!"

Ahmed wisely judged that logic here would be out of place, and that he should only lose time by arguing. What use is it to preach to a deaf man who clings to his one idea, as the Pope to his temporal power? He dressed himself, therefore, and taking with him his first dragoman, Osman Bey, who had just then returned from the Imperial Club, he drove off to M. L'Ambert's house. It was an unheard of hour, but Ayvaz would brook no delay.

The god of battles was of the same opinion; at least, so I judge from what took place. At the very moment that the first Secretary of the Turkish Legation was going to ring at M. L'Ambert's door, he came upon the enemy

in person, walking home, accompanied by his two friends.

The moment M. L'Ambert saw their red caps, he took in the situation, bowed, and said, with a certain graceful dignity, as he addressed the new comers—

“Gentlemen, as I am the sole inhabitant of this house, I can only imagine that the honour of your visit is intended for me. I am M. L'Ambert; allow me to admit you myself.”

He rang, pushed open the door, crossed the court with his four nocturnal visitors, and conducted them to his study. Then the two Turks having given their names, M. L'Ambert presented his friends to them, and left them together.

In our country, a duel can only take place

by the wish, or at any rate the consent, of six persons. Now in this case there were five who were absolutely opposed to it. M. L'Ambert was brave, but he was also perfectly aware that a scandal of this kind on account of a ballet girl was exceedingly compromising to a man in his profession. The Marquis de Villemaurin, the most fastidious and competent authority where any affair of honour was concerned, held that duelling was a noble game, where everything from the beginning to the end should be according to rule. Now a blow on the nose, received on account of a person like Mdlle. Tompain, bordered too much on the ridiculous. Moreover, he asseverated on his honour that M. L'Ambert never saw Ayvaz Bey, and that he had no intention of striking either him or any other

person. M. L'Ambert imagined he recognised the two ladies, and had advanced quickly to meet them. In raising his hat he had jostled violently, but not intentionally, some one coming in an opposite direction. It was an accident—awkwardness if you will—but no one is held responsible for an accident, or even a piece of awkwardness. M. L'Ambert's rank and education made it impossible to suppose that he would have purposely given Ayvaz Bey a blow with his fist. His well-known short-sightedness, and the semi-darkness of the Arcade, had been the cause of all the damage done. Indeed, M. L'Ambert, following the advice of his seconds, was quite ready to declare before Ayvaz Bey that he much regretted having accidentally jostled him.

This reasoning, accurate enough in itself, carried additional weight from the personality of the speaker. M. de Villemaurin was one of those gentlemen whom death appears to have overlooked, so that they may remind our degenerate age of the valorous deeds of our forefathers. By his register of birth he was only seventy-nine, but by his habits of mind and body, you would imagine he belonged to the 16th century. He thought, talked, and acted like a man who had served in the armies of the League, and harassed the Béarnais King. A rigid Royalist, and an austere Catholic, he carried into his hatred and his love an ardour that overstepped all bounds. His courage, his loyalty, his uprightness, and even a certain amount of chivalrous folly, made him the admiration of

the inconsistent youth of our day. He never laughed at anything, scarcely understood a joke, and looked upon a witticism as a want of respect. He was the least tolerant, the least amiable, and the most honourable of old men. He had accompanied Charles X. to Scotland after the disastrous days of July, but at the end of a fortnight he left Holyrood, scandalised to see how little the French Court seemed to realise its evil fortune. He sent in his resignation, permanently cut off his moustachios, which he afterwards preserved in a species of casket with this inscription :—
“My moustachios of the Royal Guard.” His subordinates, officers, and men held him in the highest esteem, but the greatest terror! They whispered to each other that he had once sent to prison for an act of insubordina-

tion his only son, a young soldier only twenty-two years of age. This worthy son of his father obstinately refusing to give in, fell ill in his dungeon, and died. Brutus-like, he wept over his son's loss, erected a magnificent tomb to his memory, and visited it twice a week, no matter what the weather or the state of his own health, but, nevertheless, was in no wise overcome by the weight of his remorse!

Upright, and carrying himself with a certain amount of stiffness, unbent by age or sorrow, he was a short, thick-set man, full of vigour, and still keeping up the exercises of his youth. He considered that a game of tennis was a much better recipe for good health than any doctor's stuff. At seventy, he had contracted a second marriage with a

young girl of good family but no fortune. By her he had two children, and secretly cherished the hope of living to be a grandfather. The love of life, so tenacious in most elderly people, influenced him very little, though his life, on the whole, was happy and prosperous.

When he was seventy-two, he fought his last duel with a dashing Colonel of six feet, and various were the motives assigned. Some said politics, others conjugal jealousy! When a man of the Marquis' rank and character so warmly espoused M. L'Ambert's cause, when he declared that a duel between Ayvaz Bey and the lawyer was useless, compromising and bad form, the articles of peace seemed to be already signed.

Such, at least, was M. Steimbourg's

opinion, who was neither young enough nor curious enough to wish for the spectacle of a duel for his own amusement, and the two Turks, both of them sensible men, momentarily accepted the apology offered to them, at the same time asking permission to consult with Ayvaz Bey, and leaving the enemy in *statu quo* while they ran off to the Embassy. It was four o'clock in the morning, but the Marquis only slept as a matter of duty, and made a point of coming to some decision before going to bed. As to the incensed Ayvaz Bey, at the first word of reconciliation from his friends, he burst out at once into a real Turkish rage.

“Am I a fool!” cried he, brandishing the jasmine-wood chibouque, which had hitherto been keeping him company. “Do you want

to persuade me that I ran my nose against M. L'Ambert's fist? He struck me, and the proof of it is the apology he offers. What are words when blood has been spilt? Can I forget that both Victoria and her mother witnessed my disgrace? Oh, my friends, there is nothing left for me but death if I do not cut off the nose of my insulter to-morrow."

Willy-nilly, the seconds were obliged once more to take up the cudgels. Ahmed and the dragoman were both sufficiently reasonable to find their friend in error, but too warm-hearted to desert his cause half way.

If the Ambassador, Hamza Pasha, had happened to be in Paris, in all probability the affair would have been stopped officially, but,

unfortunately, he was Ambassador both for England and France, and was then in London. Ayvaz's seconds pirouetted till seven o'clock in the morning between the Rue de Grenelle and the Rue de Verneuil without in the least advancing matters. At last, M. L'Ambert, losing all patience, said to his seconds—

“This Turk bothers me. He is not satisfied with having done me out of little Tompain, but now my gentleman wants to make me pass a sleepless night. All right; let the thing go on, otherwise he may think I am afraid of meeting him face to face; only, if you please, let us make haste and try, if possible, to put an end to the affair this morning. My carriage will be ready in ten minutes, we will drive two miles out of Paris.

I shall give my Turk a lesson in double quick time, and get back to my study before any of the scandal-loving newspapers can have got wind of the affair."

The Marquis again raised one or two objections, but ended by owning that M. L'Amberbert had no alternative. Ayvaz Bey's persistence was in the worst possible taste, and he deserved a good lesson. No one seemed for a moment to doubt but that the warlike lawyer, so famed in the fencing schools, was the chosen instrument of fate to give a lesson in French politeness to this Osmanli.

"My dear fellow," said the Marquis, tapping his friend on the shoulder, "our position is first-rate, for we have right on our side; the rest we must leave in the hands of Providence. The sequel may be easily guessed,

with your brave heart and quick hand ; but remember, never do your worst ; duelling is only meant to punish fools, not to destroy them ; only an awkward fellow kills his man under pretext of teaching him to live."

The choice of arms fell by right to Ayvaz Bey, and the lawyer and his seconds could not refrain from making a grimace when they found he had chosen sabres.

"It is the weapon of a common soldier," said the Marquis, "or of a citizen who won't fight ; however, let it be sabres, since you are determined."

Ayvaz Bey's seconds declared they were bent upon it, and they sent for two sabres from the barracks on the Quai d'Orsay, appointing to meet at ten o'clock in the little village of Parthenay, on the old road to Sceaux. It was now half-past eight.

Every Parisian knows this pretty cluster of about two hundred houses, the inhabitants of which are richer, cleaner, and better informed than the general run of our villagers. They cultivate their ground like gardeners, not labourers, and the outskirts of their parish every spring resemble a little paradise on earth. Fields of flowering strawberries spread their silvery space between little forests of gooseberries and raspberries, whole acres exhaling the acrid perfume of black currants, that odour so fragrant to the nostrils of Parisian porters. Paris buys with bright, golden louis the harvest of Parthenay, and those honest peasants that one sees walking slowly along—a watering-can in each hand—are in fact small capitalists.

They eat meat twice a day, despise chicken broth, and prefer roast fowl. They pay the

salaries of a commercial schoolmaster and doctor, have a corporation and a church, and vote for my witty friend, Dr. Véron, at the elections of the Legislative Council. If I remember rightly, their daughters are all pretty.

That learned archæologist, Cubaudet, recorder of the Under Prefect at Sceaux, asserts that Parthenay is a Greek colony, which derives its name from Parthenos, virgin or young girl (the word is synonymous in polite society); but this discussion is carrying us away from Ayvaz Bey.

He was the first to arrive at the place of meeting. His anger still unabated, he strode proudly up and down the village green, awaiting his opponent, and hiding under his cloak two formidable yataghans, with splen-

did Damascus blades. But why do I call them Damascus? They were Japanese steel, the kind that cuts asunder a bar of pig-iron as easily as a bundle of asparagus, provided only the arm that wields it be equal to the occasion.

Ahmed Bey and the faithful dragoman followed their friend, giving him all kinds of good advice: to attack carefully, to expose himself as little as possible, to fall back with a leap; in fact, everything one would think of saying to a novice who had never fought a duel before.

"Thank you for nothing," said this obstinate young fellow; "one does not need all this science to cut off a lawyer's nose."

The object of his vengeance soon greeted his sight between two spectacle glasses, at the

open door of a private carriage. But M. L'Ambert did not get out; he contented himself with bowing. The Marquis alighted and came towards Ahmed Bey—

“I know of an excellent spot about twenty minutes' drive from here,” said he. “Be good enough to return to your carriage with your friends, and follow me.”

The belligerents took a cross road, and alighted about a mile from the houses.

“Gentlemen,” said the Marquis, “we can easily reach on foot the little wood you see yonder, and the coachman can wait for us here. We have omitted to bring a surgeon; but the footman I have left at Parthenay will bring the village doctor to us.”

The Turk's coachman was one of those Parisian marauders who drive about after

midnight under a false number. Ayvaz Bey had hailed him at Mdle. Tompain's door, and had kept him on till they reached Parthenay. The old rascal smiled when he saw that they stopped in the open, and carried swords under their cloaks.

"Good luck to you, sir," said he to Ayvaz. "Oh! nothing will happen to you; I always bring my fares good luck. Only last year I brought one back who had left his man lying dead. He gave me twenty-five francs to drink his health, and that's as true as I sit here."

"I'll give you fifty," said Ayvaz, "if Providence only let me avenge myself in my own fashion."

M. L'Ambert was a very skilful swordsman, but too well known ever to have had occasion

to fight. A duel, therefore, was as great a novelty to him as to Ayvaz Bey, and though he had often vanquished the fencing masters of various cavalry regiments in an assault of arms, he felt a sort of nervous trepidation which, though not fear, produced analogous effects. His conversation in the carriage had been lively and brilliant; he had shown a real, though somewhat feverish, gaiety as he chatted with his friends, and had lighted three or four cigars *en route*, under pretext of smoking. When they all alighted, he walked with a firm step—rather too firm, perhaps. At the bottom of his heart he was a prey to a certain apprehension altogether manly, and altogether French; he mistrusted the strength of his nervous system, and dreaded to appear wanting in courage.

It would appear that the faculties of the mind are much keener in the most critical moments of life; hence M. L'Ambert doubtless greatly pre-occupied with the importance of the little drama in which he was to play a part, felt his attention irresistibly drawn to the most insignificant objects of the exterior world, which at any other time would hardly have attracted his notice. To his eyes nature seemed to be illumined by a clearer, brighter, more trenchant light than the ordinary rays of the sun; his pre-occupied mind seemed to take in everything that passed before his eyes. At the turning of a path he saw a cat, which was treading softly between two rows of gooseberry trees. It was a species of cat often seen in villages—long and thin, with tortoiseshell fur; one of those half-starved, wild

animals, whose master generously allows him to eat all the mice he can catch ! This one, no doubt having found the house badly provisioned as to game of this kind, had come out in search of a more plentiful supply.

M. L'Ambert's eyes having wandered aimlessly about for some time, suddenly felt themselves drawn to, and as it were fascinated by, the antics of this cat. He observed it attentively, admired its supple limbs, the firm cut of its jaw, and thought he was making a great discovery in natural history, when he remarked how closely a cat resembles a tiger !

"What the deuce are you staring at there ?" said the Marquis, touching him on the shoulder.

He instantly recovered himself, and, in a careless tone, replied—

“That ugly beast changed the current of my thoughts; you have no idea what a nuisance we find them in the shooting season. They devour more coveys than fall to our guns. . . . If I only had a gun at this moment.”

And suiting the action to the word, he pretended to aim at the cat. The animal, as if guessing his intention, jumped backwards, and disappeared.

They saw it again, a hundred yards further off, in the middle of a colza field, calmly washing its face as if awaiting the arrival of the Parisians.

“Do you mean to follow us?” said the lawyer, repeating his former menace.

The prudent beast again fled, but reappeared at the opening of the wood where

they were going to fight, and M. L'Ambert, with all the superstition of a gambler about to stake a large sum, insisted upon chasing away this unlucky fetish. He threw a stone, without hitting it, and the cat climbed up a tree, and there remained motionless.

The seconds had by this time measured the ground, and lots had been drawn for places. The best fell to M. L'Ambert, and as good luck would have it, fortune again decided in favour of his weapons, instead of the Japanese yataghans, which he might have been rather puzzled to use. Ayvaz did not trouble himself about anything; every sword was the same to him. He looked at the nose of his opponent, as the angler looks at the beautiful trout hanging to the end of his line!

Quickly divesting himself of all garments

which were not absolutely necessary, he threw his red fez and his green top-coat on the grass, and turned up his shirt sleeves to the elbow. I believe the most sleepy of Turks wakes up at the clash of arms. This big fellow, with his usually good natured countenance, seemed absolutely transformed! His face brightened, his eyes flashed, he took a sabre from the Marquis, stepped back a couple of paces, and then poured forth, in the Turkish language, the following poetic improvisation, which his friend, Osman Bey, retained and kindly translated for us—

“I have armed myself for the fight; bad luck to the giaour who offends me. Blood demands blood; thou hast struck me with the hand. I, Ayvaz, son of Ruchdi, will strike thee with the sword. Thy mutilated face

shall create laughter among all; pretty women shall turn from thee in disgust. The perfume of the roses of Symir shall be lost to thee for ever. If Mahomet only gives me strength, I ask no one for courage. Hurrah! I have armed myself for the fight!"

So saying, he threw himself on his adversary; whether he attacked him in *tierce* or in *quart*, I know not, neither did he, nor the seconds, nor M. L'Ambert; but a stream of blood spurted from the point of the sabre, a pair of spectacles slid to the ground, and the lawyer felt his head already lightened of the whole weight of his nose. There may have still remained a little bit, but so little I can only speak of it as a detail.

M. L'Ambert fell backwards, but got

up again almost immediately, and ran off with his head bent down like a blind man, or one possessed; at the same moment an opaque body fell from the branches of a neighbouring tree; a few minutes later they saw approaching a little thin man, hat in hand followed by a big servant in livery. It was M. Triquet, the medical officer of Parthenay.

Welcome worthy M. Triquet! a brilliant Paris lawyer has much need of your services; replace your old hat on your bald head, wipe away the dew drops which shine on your red cheek bones like the dew on two full-blown peonies, and turn up as quickly as possible the shiny sleeves of your venerable black coat.

But the poor man was too much excited to be able to get to work directly. He

chattered, chattered, chattered in a little breathless shaky voice.

“Good heavens!” said he, “my respects to you gentlemen, I am your very humble servant. Dear Lord! Can such doings be permitted? its nothing short of mutilation; I see decidedly it is too late to talk of reconciliation, the evil is done. Ah, gentlemen, gentlemen, youth will be youth. I myself was once very nearly led away to destroy a fellow creature; it was in 1820. What did I do gentlemen? I apologised, yes, apologised, and I take all the more credit to myself, for I had right on my side. Have you ever read Rousseau’s grand argument against duelling? Quite irrefutable, a piece of literary and moral chrestomathy, and mind you, Rousseau has not said everything; if he had studied the

human frame, that *chef d'œuvre* of creation, God's admirable image upon earth, he would have demonstrated how wicked it is to destroy so perfect a whole. I am not speaking at the person who has done the deed, Heaven forbid; no doubt he had his reasons, which I respect. If you only knew the trouble we poor doctors have in curing even the smallest wound; it is true we make our living by it, but what does that signify. For my own part I would rather deprive myself of many things, and live on bacon and brown bread, than witness the sufferings of my fellow creatures."

The Marquis interrupted this lamentation.

"How, now, doctor, we did not come here to philosophise, here is a man bleeding like

a pig, the question is how to stop the hemorrhage."

"Yes, Marquis," repeated he quickly, "the hemorrhage, that is the right word; happily I foresaw all that. Here is a little bottle of hemostatic water; it is a preparation of Brocchieri, and I prefer it to Léchelle's prescription."

Upon which he turned, with the bottle in his hand, towards M. L'Ambert, who was seated at the foot of a tree, bleeding piteously.

"Sir," said he with a low bow, "believe me when I say how much I regret not owing the honour of your acquaintance to a less painful event."

Master L'Ambert raised his head, and in a doleful voice asked—

"Doctor, shall I lose my nose?"

“ No, sir, you will not lose it, for, alas ! you have no longer one to lose—it is already lost, honoured sir.”

While speaking, he poured out some Brocchieri water on a compress.

“ Heavens ! ” cried he suddenly, “ I have an idea I can restore to you the useful and pleasant organ that you have lost.”

“ What the devil do you mean ? speak out ; my whole fortune shall be yours ! Oh, doctor, I would rather die at once, than remain thus disfigured for life.”

“ That is easily said, but let me see, where is the piece that has been cut off ? I am not a champion of the profession, like Velpeau or Hugier, but I will try to mend things on the primary plan.”

M. L'Ambert jumped up and ran quickly

to the field of battle, the Marquis and M. Steimbourg following him; the Turks also who were walking sadly together—for Ayvaz Bey's anger had soon vanished—drew near to their quondam enemies. The place was easily found where the combatants had trampled the tender grass under foot; the lawyer's spectacles were picked up, but the lawyer's nose was nowhere. What they did see, was a cat, a horrible tortoiseshell cat, licking its bloody lips with evident enjoyment!

“Damnation!” screamed the Marquis, pointing to the beast; every one understood the gesture, and the exclamation.

“Would there still be time?” enquired the lawyer.

“Perhaps,” replied the doctor.

Nothing for it but to give chase, and the cat, not caring to be taken, ran off also.

Never had the little wood of Parthenay witnessed such a hunt, and in all probability it never will again. A marquis, a stock-broker, three diplomatists, a footman in grand livery, a village doctor, and a notary holding his handkerchief to his bleeding face ; one and all rushing wildly after one lean cat !

Running, shouting, throwing stones, dead branches, or anything that came to hand, they crossed roads and by-paths, and plunged headlong into the thickest brushwood ; sometimes in a group, sometimes dispersed, sometimes in single file, sometimes surrounding the enemy ; beating the bushes, shaking the shrubs, climbing the trees, tearing their

boots on the stumps and their clothes on the brambles, they whirled on like a tempest, but the infernal cat was swifter than the wind.

Twice they got him into a circle, twice he forced the enclosure and took to the fields. At one time, seemingly overcome by fatigue and pain, he fell over on his side in trying to jump from one tree to another on the track of the squirrels. M. L'Ambert's servant rushed quickly after him, reached him with a bound, and seized him by the tail. But this miniature tiger, freely making use of its claws, got loose again, and fled out of the wood. They followed him into the open in spite of the long distance they had already come, nothing daunted by the immense plain stretching out like a chess-board before the pursuers and their prey.

The heat was intense, heavy black clouds were gathering in the west, the perspiration ran down every face ; but nothing could arrest the impetuosity of these eight men.

M. L'Ambert, all bleeding as he was, kept up the spirits of his companions by his voice and gestures. No one who has not seen a lawyer in pursuit of his own nose can form a just idea of his ardour. Good-by strawberries and raspberries ! adieu gooseberries and black currants !—wherever the avalanche had passed all hopes of harvest were trodden down, trampled and destroyed : nothing remained but crushed flowers, shoots torn off, branches broken, and stems snapped off. The peasants—surprised by the sudden invasion of the unknown destroyers, threw down their watering-cans, crying out for the

rural police, and loudly demanding satisfaction for the injury done to their property—in their turn gave chase to the hunters.

Victory ! At last the cat was taken ; it had thrown itself down a well. Oh ! for a pail ! a cord ! a ladder ! They made sure of finding the lawyer's nose intact, or, at any rate, nearly so. But, alas ! this well is not like an ordinary well, it is the mouth of an old quarry, whose galleries extend in all directions in a network of more than ten miles, and then lose themselves in the catacombs of Paris !

M. Triquet's services were well paid ; the country people all received the indemnity they demanded, and then, sad and disappointed, the disconsolate party returned in a torrent of rain to Parthenay.

Before getting into his carriage, Ayvaz Bey, dripping like a duck, but quite calm, came up and offered his hand to M. L'Ambert.

"Sir," said he, "I sincerely regret that my obstinacy has carried matters so far. That little Tompain is not worth even a drop of the blood which has been shed for her. I shall dismiss her to-morrow, for I could never see her again without thinking of the misfortune she has caused. You are a witness that I did all I could to help those gentlemen to recover what you have lost. I can only hope that the injury is not irreparable. The village doctor has reminded us that there are in Paris more skilful practitioners than himself, and I fancy I have heard that modern surgery possesses many infallible ap-

pliances for the restoration of either mutilated or destroyed organs."

M. L'Ambert, with rather a bad grace, accepted the hand so loyally offered, and was driven back with his two friends to the Faubourg St. Germain.





CHAPTER III.

THE LAWYER DEFENDS HIS SKIN SUCCESSFULLY.

A happy-go-lucky sort of fellow was the Jehu of Ayvaz Bey. This *ci-devant* street-boy of Paris actually felt less pleasure in his gratuity of fifty francs than in having driven his Honour's chariot wheels to victory, as he called it.

"Excuse me," he said to Ayvaz Bey, "is this the way you always serve your enemies? It is just as well to know, for if I had the misfortune to tread on your toes I should lose no time in asking your pardon. This poor man would find it rather difficult to

take a pinch of snuff! Well, well; if any one asserts before me that the Turks are a stupid race, I shall know what answer to give them. I told you I should bring you back. Now I know an old fellow from Brions who is just the reverse; he casts the evil eye on all his fares—anyone he takes out is sure to be floored! Gie up, my beauty! a glorious hallelujah! The Courrousel horses can't hold a candle to you to-day!"

This buffoonery did not in the least disturb the gravity of the three Turks, and the coachman apparently was the only person to appreciate his own wit.

Meanwhile, in a carriage infinitely better appointed, the unfortunate lawyer was bemoaning himself to his two friends.

"It is all up with me," he said, "I'm no

better than a dead man; there is nothing left but to blow my brains out. I can never again go into society, nor to the opera, nor any other theatre. How can I present to the eyes of the world so lamentable and grotesque a figure, which in some might excite pity while others would only laugh ! ”

“ Pooh ! ” replied the Marquis, “ the world in time gets accustomed to anything ; besides, after all, if you dread its remarks you can always stay at home.”

“ Stay at home for ever ! what a charming prospect ! Do you suppose women would come and console me at home in the state to which I am now reduced ? ”

“ You must marry. I once knew a Captain of Cuirassiers who had lost an arm, a leg, and an eye. As you may imagine, the women

did not rave about him, but he married a nice girl, neither pretty nor ugly, who loved him devotedly, and made his life perfectly happy."

Perhaps M. L'Ambert did not see anything very attractive in the proposal, for he cried in a tone of despair—

"Oh, women, women, women!"

"Good heavens," exclaimed the Marquis, "your thought, like a weathercock, always turns in the same direction. Why the devil can't you turn over a new leaf? Cultivate your talents, do good to your neighbour; in fact, fulfil all the duties of your station in life. It is not necessary to have such a long nose to be a good Christian, a good citizen, and a good lawyer."

"Lawyer!" repeated he, with ill-concealed bitterness; "lawyer, indeed, that is about all

I take it. Yesterday I was a man of the world, a gentleman, and I may say, without any false modesty, much sought after in the best society. To-day I am only a lawyer, and who knows if I shall be even that to-morrow? It only needs the slightest indiscretion on the part of my servant to make this absurd affair known everywhere; if only a hint of it gets into any of the newspapers the Magistracy would feel obliged to take proceedings against my opponent, his seconds, and even yourselves, gentlemen. Think of us all figuring in a police-court, relating why and how I followed Mdlle. Tompain! Imagine such a scandal, and tell me how much there would be left of the lawyer afterwards!"

"My dear fellow," remonstrated the Marquis, "you are raising bug-bears. Men of

our position—and you are one of us, after a fashion—have the privilege of cutting each other's throats with impunity. Magistracy winks at our quarrels, and quite right, too. I can understand a fuss being made when journalists, artists, and others of an inferior grade take a sword into their hands. It is necessary to remind those fellows that they have fists to fight with, the fittest kind of weapon to defend the sort of honour they possess. But only let a gentleman act as a gentleman and the law has nothing to say, and will say nothing. I have had fifteen or twenty affairs of this sort since I left the army, and some of them very unfortunate for my adversaries, I can tell you; but have you ever seen my name in the police reports?"

M. Steimbourg was less intimate with M.

L'Ambert than the Marquis de Villemaurin. Unlike the latter, his title-deeds had not been lying in the office of the Rue de Verneuil for the last four or five generations. He only knew these gentlemen from having met them at the Club and the whist table. The lawyer might possibly have put him up to a good thing or two in the way of stock operations. But he was a good fellow, and a sensible man, and now added his mite in the way of reasoning with, and trying to console, this unfortunate.

In his opinion M. de Villemaurin took too dark a view of the matter. Surely there must be some alternative. To say that M. L'Ambert must remain thus disfigured for the rest of his life was to ignore the power of science altogether.

“What would be the advantage of being born in the nineteenth century,” said he, “if the slightest accident that befalls us is to prove, as in former days, an irreparable misfortune? What superiority should we possess over those who lived in the dark ages? Do not let us blaspheme the sacred name of progress—operative surgery is now, thank Heaven, more flourishing than ever in Ambroise Pare’s native country. That good old fellow at Parthenay mentioned the names of several celebrated operators who have, so to speak, successfully repieced the human frame. Here we are, at the gates of Paris; let us stop at the first chemist’s, and he will tell us where to find either Velpeau or Hugier; your servant can then run for one or other, and bring him back to your house. I am

certain I have often heard of surgeons who have replaced an eyelid, a lip, or the tip of an ear, &c. Why should it be more difficult to restore the tip of a nose ? ”

It was only a vague hope. Still it helped to cheer the poor lawyer, whose wound for the last half hour had ceased bleeding. The very idea of once more becoming what he had been, taking up the daily routine of his life again, made him almost beside himself with joy.

“Oh, my friends,” said he, nervously twisting his fingers together, my whole fortune belongs to the man who cures me. I will submit calmly to any amount of pain if success is only certain ; let expense or suffering count for nothing.”

In this frame of mind he reached his house, while his valet went in search of a surgeon.

M. Steimbourg and the Marquis accompanied him to his apartment, and there left him—the one to go home and re-assure his wife and daughters, whom he had not seen since the previous evening ; the other to rush off to the Bourse.

Left quite alone, opposite to a Venetian mirror, which mercilessly reflected his pitiable appearance, Alfred L'Ambert fell into a state of the deepest despondency. This strong man, who never allowed himself to weep at the theatre, because he thought it bad form ; this gentleman of serene aspect, who had attended the funeral of both his parents without exhibiting any emotion, now wept over the mutilation of his handsome face, and deluged it with his selfish tears.

The entrance of the servant at this mo-

ment diverted his attention to the coming visit of M. Berniers, the surgeon of the Hotel Dieu, a member of the Society of Surgeons, of the Academy of Medicine, and Professor of Clinical Surgery, &c., &c. The man, in his anxiety, had gone to the nearest doctor, and, luckily for his master, he had hit upon a very clever one, for though M. Bernier might not, perhaps, quite equal Vilpeau, Mance, and Hugier, he treads very closely on the heels of these gentlemen.

“Let him come,” cried M. L’Ambert. “What is keeping him? Does he think I am like ‘patience on a monument’?”

Thereupon he began to cry again, actually to cry before his servant. Is it possible that a mere sabre cut can so completely metamorphose a man’s demeanour?

Assuredly when he cut through the nasal channel Ayvaz Bey must at the same time have injured the lachrymal gland and caused the tear ducts to overflow.

The lawyer dried his eyes for the purpose of looking through a book which had just been sent in from M. Steimbourg. It was a treatise on practical surgery, by Ringuet, an excellent work, embellished with 300 engravings. M. Steimbourg had bought it on his way to the Bourse, and sent it to his friend, doubtless hoping therewith to divert his thoughts.

But the effect was very different from what he anticipated. When M. L'Ambert had turned over about two hundred pages, and had seen arrayed before his eyes a lamentable succession of amputations, cauterisations,

ligatures and resections, he could endure no more. Letting the book fall from his hands, he threw himself into an arm-chair, and closed his eyes.

In vain ! His mental vision still beheld lacerated flesh, muscles held back by hooks, dissected limbs, and bones sawn through by the hands of invisible operators. The faces of the patients appeared to him, as they invariably do in anatomical drawings, calm, stoical, and indifferent to pain ; and he asked himself if it were possible such a wonderful amount of courage could belong to any individual.

Above all, he was haunted by one of the pictures—the figure of a surgeon on page 80, dressed in black, with a velvet collar to his coat. This strange-looking person had rather

a large head, with a high, bald forehead, and a serious expression of countenance. He is depicted sawing asunder the two bones of a living leg.

“Monster!” cried the lawyer.

At that moment he saw the monster in the flesh, as his servant announced M. Bernier.

M. L'Ambert fled into the furthest corner of the room, staring wildly, and holding his hands before him, as if to stop the approach of the enemy, his teeth chattering as he murmured, like the hero of one of M. Xavier Montépin's novels,

“'Tis he! he! he!”

“Sir,” said the doctor, “I am sorry to have kept you waiting, and I beg you to calm yourself; I know all about your accident, and I don't think the evil is without

remedy, but we shall do no good if you are afraid of me."

Fear is a word that rings discordantly in the ear of a Frenchman. M. L'Ambert stamped his foot, walked straight up to the doctor, and said with a little laugh, too nervous to be natural—

"By Jove! doctor, you must be jesting; do I look like a man who is afraid? Had I been a coward, I should not have run the risk of being disfigured in this fashion. But while waiting for you I was turning over the pages of a book on surgery, and there I found a face so exactly like yours that when you entered I felt convinced I saw a ghost! Add to this surprise all I have gone through this morning—perhaps even a slight touch of fever—and I think you will be inclined to

forgive the strange reception you have met with."

"That's right," said M. Bernier, picking up the book; "oh, I see, you have been reading Ringuet; he is a friend of mine, and now I think of it, he had an engraving of me done from a water colour of L  veille's, but let me beg of you to be seated."

The lawyer grew more collected, and narrated the events of the morning, not forgetting the episode of the cat, who had, so to speak, made him lose his nose twice over.

"It is certainly a misfortune," said the surgeon, "but one that can be repaired in a month. Since reading Ringuet's book, you must have some slight notion of surgery?"

M. L'Ambert confessed that he had not had the courage to read so far as the chapter in question.

“Well then,” said the doctor, “I will give you the pith of it in few words—rhinoplasty is the art of making a new nose for those unfortunates who have lost their own.”

“Is it really true, doctor, this miracle is possible? Science has indeed discovered a way to—”

“She has discovered no less than three; but I must put the French plan entirely aside, it is not applicable in this case; had you not lost so large a portion of your nose, I might have lifted the edges of the wound, brought them together again, and left them to grow together as originally intended, but this is out of the question now, we must no longer think of it.”

“And I am only too thankful that it is so,” said the wounded man, “you cannot conceive,

doctor, the effect your words have on my nerves—pray let us think of some less painful method.”

“Surgeons, as a rule, do not adopt tender measures, but at any rate you have the choice of two methods—the Indian and the Italian. The first consists in cutting a triangular piece of skin out of the forehead, the point below, the base above ; this is the foundation of the new nose ! The piece of skin is loosened entirely with the exception of the lower pedicle, which remains adherent ; this is twisted so as to let the epidermis remain outside, and the edges are sewn to the corresponding sides of the wound. In a word I am ready to make you a very presentable nose at the expense of your forehead. The ultimate success of the operation is certain,

but you must make up your mind to a large and ineffacable scar on the forehead."

"No scar for me, doctor. I won't have it at any price, I will even say—pray excuse my apparent weakness—I will have no operation. I have already undergone one to-day, at the hands of that confounded Turk, and I do not wish for another, the very thought of it freezes my blood. My courage is as great as most men's, but I have highly strung nerves. I have no fear of death, but I shrink from suffering. Kill me if you like, but for God's sake do not mutilate me any further!"

"Sir," replied the doctor, in an ironical tone, "if you have so completely set yourself against an operation you should have sent for a homœopath, not a surgeon."

"Please do not laugh at me, but really I

cannot get over the idea of this operation. The Indians are savages, and their practice worthy of themselves ; but did you not mention the Italian method ? I do not like the Italians politically, they are an ungrateful nation, and have behaved in a most shameful manner to their legitimate rulers, but in matters of science I have a better opinion of the scoundrels ! ”

“ Very well then, let us decide in favour of the Italian practice—sometimes it succeeds admirably, but it requires an amount of patience and an immobility of which perhaps you might not be capable.”

“ If it only requires patience and immobility, I can answer for myself.”

“ Are you capable of remaining for thirty days in a most uncomfortable position ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ With your nose sewn to your left arm ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Very well, then all I have to do is to cut a triangular piece of flesh out of your arm so many inches long and so many wide, I—”

“ You intend to cut that out of my flesh ? ”

“ Certainly.”

“ But Doctor, that is something too horrible, to skin me alive, to cut strips out of the hide of a living man ; no it is too barbarous, it is a device of the middle ages, and worthy of Shylock, the Jew of Venice.”

“ The wound in the arm is nothing, the difficulty will be to remain sewn to yourself for a whole month.”

“ For my part, I dread nothing but the

scalpel; to feel the cold steel enter your flesh is a thing never to be forgotten for the rest of one's life. Thanks, my dear Doctor, I don't wish for a repetition of it."

"That being the case, sir, I have nothing more to do here, and you must remain noseless for the rest of your life."

This frightful alternative overwhelmed the lawyer with consternation. He tore his beautiful light hair, and paced the room like a maniac.

"Mutilated," sighed he, with tears in his eyes. "Mutilated for ever, and no remedy for my misfortune! If only there was some drug, some mysterious topical remedy, by virtue of which a nose could be restored to him who had lost it, I would buy it at its weight in gold. Yes! I would send to the

ends of the earth in search of it. I would even charter a ship, if it was absolutely necessary! But no, there is nothing to be done! Of what good is my wealth? of what use your fame, if neither your talent nor my sacrifices can obtain the thing I need? Riches, science—what empty words!”

From time to time M. Bernier struck in, in his calm, imperturbable manner—

“Only let me cut a piece of skin out of your arm, and I can easily enough replace your nose.”

At one time M. L'Ambert seemed to have made up his mind. He took off his coat, rolled up his shirt sleeve, but when he looked on the open case, when the polished steel of thirty instruments of torture flashed before his eyes, he turned pale, and fell half fainting

into a chair. Some drops of aromatic vinegar soon restored his consciousness, but not his resolution.

"It is of no use, Doctor," said he, re-adjusting his dress. "Our generation can boast of plenty of courage, but we tremble at the sight of pain; it is the fault of our parents who have made molly-coddles of us!"

A few minutes after, this religiously-brought-up young man began to blaspheme Providence.

"Truly," said he, "this world is a bear garden, and I must compliment the Creator on His work! Here am I, with 200,000 francs a year, and yet I must remain snub-nosed as a death's head, while my porter, who has not ten crowns to bless himself with, sports a nose worthy of the Apollo of

Belvedere! That wisdom which foresees most things, could never have imagined that I should have my nose cut off because I said how do you do to Mdle. Tompain! At this moment, there are in France no less than three millions of rascals whose whole body would not fetch ten sous each, and yet I, with all my money, am not able to buy a nose from one of these creatures—but, after all, why not?”

His face suddenly brightened with a ray of hope, as he continued, in a calmer tone—

“My old uncle, who recently died at Poitiers, had, now I think of it, so many ounces of blood injected into his median cephaline vein, during his last illness, thanks to the devotion of an old and faithful Breton servant. And my beautiful aunt, Mdme.

Giromeny, in the height of her beauty, ordered an incisor to be drawn from the mouth of her handsomest waiting maid to replace the tooth she had just lost ! The graft took very well, and only cost her three louis ! Doctor, did you not say that if it had not been for that brute of a cat, you could have sewn my nose again to my face while the piece was still warm. Tell me, yes or no ? ”

“ Certainly, and I say so again.”

“ Then, if I were to buy some poor devil’s nose, could you not just as easily graft that on to the middle of my face ? ”

“ I could.”

“ Bravo ! ”

“ But I shall not do it, and not one of my fellow practitioners would do it either.”

“ And for what reason, pray ? ”

“Because it would be a crime to mutilate a healthy man, even if the patient were weak enough, or stupid enough, to consent.”

“Really, Doctor, you upset all my preconceived notions of justice. My substitute in the conscription was a hybrid Alsatian, with a skin like a burnt chestnut. My man (I have surely a perfect right to call him so) had his head carried off by a cannon ball, on the 30th of April, 1849. As the shot in question was certainly meant by fate for me, I may say that the Alsatian sold me not only his head, but his whole body, for 100 or 140 louis. The State not only tolerated, but approved of this transaction; you can have nothing to say against it. Most likely you bought, for the same price, a man who got himself killed in your stead; yet when I offer

to give twice that sum to any scoundrel that may turn up, merely for the tip of his nose, mind you, you cry shame ! ”

The Doctor was silent for a moment, hoping to hit upon a logical answer, but not finding what he wanted, he said to M. L'Ambert—

“ Though my conscience forbids me to disfigure a fellow creature in your behalf, I see no reason why I should not take the few inches of skin that you require out of the arm of some poor fellow.”

“ That's right, my dear Doctor ; take them when you please ; only repair this stupid accident. Let us look out at once for some good-natured fellow, and long life to the Italian method ! ”

“ Again I must remind you that you will

have to remain a whole month in a state of extreme discomfort."

"What do I care for discomfort? I shall be disporting myself again in another month in the green-room of the Opera!"

"Very good; have you thought of any one—for instance, that porter you mentioned just now?"

"The very man; I might easily buy him and his whole family, wife included, for five pounds. When my old porter, Bartereau, retired, Heaven knows where, to live on his means, this fellow was recommended to me by one of my clients. Poor wretch, he was literally dying of starvation!"

M. L'Ambert rang the bell, and gave orders to send up Singuet, the new porter.

The man came immediately, and uttered a

cry of horror when he saw his master's condition.

He was the real type of a poor Parisian devil ; the poorest and most ill-conditioned of all devils. A little man of thirty-five, whom you would have taken for sixty, he was so thin, and yellow, and wizened.

M. Bernier examined him all round, and soon sent him back to his lodge.

"That man's skin is good for nothing," said the Doctor. "You must remember that gardeners always choose their grafts from the healthiest and most vigorous trees. Pick me out a fine, robust fellow amongst your servants ; there must be such a one out of the whole lot."

"No doubt, it is very easy to talk of picking out one ; but allow me to tell you my

servants are all gentlemen, men of capital, who have money in the Three per Cents., and speculate on 'Change, like all the servants in great houses! I don't know one among them who would be willing to buy with his blood the vile dross that is so easily picked up at the Bourse."

"But you might, perhaps, find one whose personal devotion would induce him to—"

"Devotion amongst such a set? You must be joking, Doctor! Our fathers had devoted servants—we have nothing but worthless flunkeys, and perhaps in the long run we gain by it. Our fathers being beloved by their people, thought it only right and proper to show them some return. They condoned their faults, nursed them in illness, and provided for them in their old age—it was the

very deuce! I pay my servants to do their work, and if it is not properly done, I don't stop to find out if it is temper, illness, or infirmity, but I give them the sack!"

"At that rate we are not likely to find the man we want under this roof; can you think of no one else?"

"Not I, but surely any one will do, the first who comes—the commissionaire round the corner, why not that very man I hear in the streets shouting water at this moment?"

He took his spectacles from his pocket, drew aside the curtain, and looking into the street, said to the doctor—

"There is a good looking fellow, be kind enough to attract his attention; I cannot show my face on account of the passers by."

M. Bernier opened the window at the very

moment that the proposed victim was shouting at the top of his voice—

“ Water !—water !—water !”

“ My lad,” said the doctor, “ leave your barrel there, and come up here by the Rue de Verneuil, there is some money to be got by it.”





CHAPTER IV.

SEBASTIAN ROMAGNÉ.

HIS family name was Romagné, and his godfathers and godmother had him christened Sebastian, but being a native of Frognac-les-Mauriac in the department of Cantal, he always addressed his patron saint as Chebastion; no doubt he would have written his name thus, but fortunately he was utterly ignorant of the art of chirography.

This child of Auvergne was twenty-three years old, of Herculean build, tall, stout, broad shouldered, bony, thickset, strong as an ox, yet gentle and easy to manage as

a little white lamb ; imagine a man cast in the most substantial mould, the coarsest and the most solid. He was the eldest of ten children, boys and girls, all living and hearty, swarming under the paternal roof. His father's possessions consisted of a hut, a small field, some chestnut trees on the mountains, half-a-dozen pigs, taking the good year with the bad, and two strong arms wherewith to dig the ground. The mother spent her time spinning flax, the little boys helped their father, while the girls took care of the house, and helped to bring up the little ones ; from the eldest to the youngest in rotation. Young Sebastian never shone, either by his intelligence or his memory, or any other mental gift, but he was overflowing with the milk of human kindness. He had

been taught his catechism as a blackbird is taught to whistle a tune, but he always possessed and retained the most Christian sentiments. He never was cruel, either to children or animals, kept out of quarrels, and very often received a blow without returning it. If the *sous prefet* had wished to give him a silver medal, he need only have written to Paris, for Sebastian had saved the lives of many persons at the risk of his own, and on one occasion, had rescued two policemen, who would otherwise have perished with their horses in the Saumaise. But somehow it seemed quite a matter of course that he should do these things: they came to him by instinct as it were, and there was no more idea of rewarding him than if he had been a Newfoundland dog.

At twenty years of age he went in for the conscription ; fortunately for himself, drew a lucky number, thanks to a nine days' devotion, which he had performed with the rest of his family. Some time after this, he made up his mind to go to Paris, as so many Auvergnats do, with the hope of earning some money to send his parents. They gave him a new suit of velveteen, and twenty francs, which was thought a large sum in that part of the world, and he went off, taking advantage of the escort of a friend, who knew the road to Paris. He performed the journey on foot in ten days, and arrived fresh and hearty, with a pair of new shoes in his hand, and twelve francs in his pocket.

Two days after he was drawing a water barrel in the Faubourg St. Germain, helping

a friend, who was no longer equal to the effort of climbing the stairs, on account of a wrench he had given himself. He received for his trouble board, lodging, and washing at the rate of a shirt a month, to say nothing of a handsome salary of fifteen pence a week for his bachelor pleasures.

At the end of a year, he had saved enough to buy himself a second-hand barrel, and set up on his own account, and he succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations. His simple politeness, his untiring good nature, and his well known honesty, won him golden opinions in all the neighbourhood. Beginning with the daily ascending and descending of two thousand stairs, he gradually increased to seven thousand, and what was more to the purpose he was able to send

home, every month, sixty francs to his people at Frognac. His family held his name in veneration, and always remembered him in their prayers night and morning ; the little boys had all new breeches, and it even became a question of sending the two youngest to school.

With all this, their benefactor had changed in no way his mode of life ; he slept every night in a shed by the side of his barrel, and four times a year he changed the straw which composed his bed. His velveteen suit had more patches than a harlequin's costume ; in truth his toilet would have cost him next to nothing had it not been for those confounded shoes, which required at least a pound of nails every month. The expenses of his table were the only ones in which he

exercised no economy ; he allowed himself without compunction, four pounds of bread a day ; sometimes by way of luxury, he regaled his stomach with a piece of cheese, or an onion, or half-a-dozen apples bought from a heap on the Pont Neuf. On Sundays and holidays, he allowed himself soup or meat, and licked his lips in remembrance of it all the rest of the week.

But he was too good a son and a brother ever to think of wine—wine, women, and tobacco were to him fabulous luxuries, which he only knew by report. Still less was he acquainted with theatres, a pleasure so dear to all Parisian workmen. He preferred going to bed at seven o'clock than spending ten sous to applaud M. Dumaine.

Such was the physical and moral condition

of the man whom M. Bernier hailed in the Rue de Beaume, with the idea of getting him to lend a portion of his skin for M. L'Ambert's benefit.

The people of the house, having been told beforehand, quickly ushered him in.

He advanced timidly, hat in hand, raising his feet as high as he possibly could, hardly daring to let them rest on the carpet; the storm of that morning had splashed him with mud up to his armpits.

"Is it water you want," said he, addressing himself to the doctor. "I—"

M. Bernier interrupted him.

"No, my lad, it has nothing to do with your business."

"Then, monsieur, it is for some other thing?"

"Quite another thing; this gentleman had his nose cut off this morning."

"The devil he has! poor man, who did that?"

"A Turk—but that is of no consequence."

"What a savage! I have always heard it said that the Turks were savages, but I did not know they were allowed to run loose in Paris. Just wait a minute, and I will go and fetch a superintendent of police."

M. Bernier put a stop to this burst of zeal on the part of the worthy Auvergnat, by explaining, in a few words, what was required from him. At first he thought they were making fun of him, for it is quite possible to be a first-rate water carrier, and yet have no notion of rhinoplasm. The doctor made him understand that they wanted to pur-

chase a month of his time, and so many square inches of his skin.

“The operation is nothing,” said he, “and you will hardly suffer at all, but I warn you beforehand, you will require an immense amount of patience to remain perfectly quiet, during a whole month, with your arm sewn to this gentleman’s nose ! ”

“Patience,” replied he, “I have plenty of that, I was not born in Auvergne for nothing ; but if I spend a month under this roof in order to oblige monsieur, I shall require to be paid the value of my time.”

“Certainly, that is understood ; how much do you want ? ”

“Conscientiously, I think it would be worth four francs a day.”

“No, my friend,” said the lawyer, “it is

worth a thousand francs—forty pounds—for the month.”

“No,” returned the doctor, in a tone of authority, “it is worth two thousand francs.”

M. L'Ambert bowed his head and made no objection.

Romagné asked if he might be allowed to finish his day's work, take back his water barrel to the shed, and find a substitute for the month.

“After all,” said he, “it is hardly worth while beginning now when half the day is gone.”

But they made him understand that this was a very important case, and he made arrangements accordingly. One of his friends was sent for, who promised to supply his place during his temporary absence.

“ You will bring me my bread every day,” said Romagné, upon which he was assured that it would be quite unnecessary, as he would be fed in the house.

“ That depends on how much it would cost.”

“ Oh, M. L'Ambert will provide that for nothing.”

“ For nothing ! that suits me down to the ground, here goes—skin me at once ! ”

He bore the operation like a brave man, not even an eyelid quivered.

“ It is a pleasure,” said he. “ I have heard of a countryman of mine, who let himself be petrified in a stream for a franc an hour ; I prefer to be cut up by inches, it is less annoying, and apparently pays better.”

M. Bernier sewed his left arm to the

lawyer's face, and these two men remained a whole month rivetted to one another. The Siamese twins, who formerly excited the curiosity of all Europe, were not more closely united. But then they were brothers, accustomed to endure each other from their earliest infancy, having received the same education. If one had been a water carrier and the other a lawyer, they might not always have presented such a charming spectacle of fraternal love !

Romagné never complained of anything, though at first the situation was very strange and novel to him ; he obeyed like a slave, or rather a Christian, all the whims of the man who had bought his skin. He got up, sat down, went to bed, turned from right to left, from left to right, according to the will of his

lord and master. The magnetic needle is not more faithful to the North pole than Romagné proved to M. L'Ambert.

This heroic gentleness touched the heart of the lawyer, which by the way was not a very tender one. For three days he felt a kind of gratitude for all the attentions of his victim, but he soon took a disgust to him, and finally a perfect horror.

A man, young, active, and in sound health, can seldom reconcile himself to remain in a state of perfect quiescence, how much more trying then to remain always thus, in the society of an inferior creature, unclean and uneducated?

But fate had willed it so, and he must either live without a nose, or be in close contact with the water carrier, eat with him,

sleep with him, and fulfil with him, in the most inconvenient position, all the necessary functions of life !

Romagné was a worthy, excellent, young fellow, but he snored like a pig—he adored his family, and loved his neighbour, but he hated water, and had never taken a bath in his life for fear of wasting his merchandise. He had highly delicate sentiments on some points, but the most elementary restraints of civilization were entirely unknown to him. Poor M. L'Ambert and poor Romagné ! what nights, what days, what kicks given and received ! It is needless to say Romagné received his in silence, he was afraid to make the slightest abrupt movement, for fear of spoiling M. Bernier's experiment.

The lawyer had a great many visitors, and

some of his gay friends amused themselves with the peculiarities of the Auvergnat, they taught him to smoke cigars, to drink wine and brandy. The poor devil gave himself up to these new pleasures, with all the ingenuousness of a Red Indian; they made him tipsy—they made him drunk, and forced him to descend all the steps of the ladder which separates man from the brute creation. It was an education to begin from the very commencement, and these gentlemen took a cruel delight in it. Was it not an agreeable novelty, to demoralise an Auvergnat? One day they asked him what he intended doing with the two thousand francs he would have earned from M. L'Ambert, when the month was out.

“I shall invest them where I can get five

per cent. for them," said he, "and then I shall have an income of one hundred francs."

"And afterwards," asked a young millionaire of twenty-five, "will you be any richer for it, or any happier? It will bring you in sixpence a day, that's all. If you marry, which is certain, for you are a chip of the block from which fools are made, you will have at least a dozen children."

"That is very likely."

"And in obedience to the civil code, which is one of those charming inventions of the Empire, you will leave them each two farthings a day to live on, whilst with two thousand francs, you might live like a nobleman for a month, taste all the pleasures of life, and soar far above your neighbours!"

Poor fellow, he tried to defend himself

against these moral temptations, but they struck so many, and repeated blows on his thick skull, that at last these corrupt notions forced themselves a passage, and took possession of his brain.

Some ladies came also. M. L'Ambert knew many, and of all classes. Romagné assisted at all kinds of scenes. He heard the most ardent protestations of love, with utterly incredible fidelity.

M. L'Ambert, not content with lying on his own account, used often to amuse himself by expressing to his companion the tissue of deceit which is, so to speak, the canvas of society.

As to the business world, Romagné felt like Christopher Columbus, his discoveries on this point were so startling.

M. L'Ambert's clients put no more restraint on themselves before the water carrier than if they had been speaking before half-a-dozen of oysters. He heard fathers of families trying to rob their sons legally of an inheritance, in favour of a mistress or some ostentatious charity; marriageable young men seeking to find out beforehand how they might defraud their wife by the contract of her dowry. Money-lenders, who wanted ten per cent. on the first mortgage, and borrowers, who gave a mortgage upon what did not exist.

Romagné had not much sense, and his uncultivated intelligence was not very superior to that of a spaniel; but his conscience revolted at what he heard, and he thought it *right* one day to say to M. L'Ambert, "I do *not* esteem you."

After this, the repugnance the lawyer had always felt for him changed into a decided hatred.

The last eight days of their enforced intimacy were one series of storms, till at last M. Bernier decided that the graft had taken root, in spite of tugs without number. The two enemies were severed from each other, and he modelled the lawyer a nose out of the skin which no longer belonged to Romagné.

The millionaire of the Rue de Verneuil at once flung two bank bills for a thousand francs into the face of his slave, saying—

“Here, scoundrel, the money is nothing; but you have cost me more than a thousand crowns in patience. Go, get out of this, and let me never hear of you again!”

Romagné thanked him proudly, drank a

bottle of wine in the butler's pantry, two glasses of spirits with Singuet, at the lodge, and then walked off with unsteady gait towards his former place of abode.





CHAPTER V.

GRANDEUR AND DOWNFALL.

M. L'AMBERT'S reappearance in society was a great success—I had almost said a glorious one.

His seconds bore ample testimony to his courage, declaring that he fought like a lion, and all the old lawyers felt themselves young again on the strength of his bravery.

“Yes, indeed! We show what we are made of if driven to extremities; being a notary does not make one less a man. Master L'Ambert had the chances of war against him; but it is grand to be thus beaten. Quite

a second Waterloo. We are still jolly good fellows, say what they will."

Thus spoke the respectable Master Clopineau, and the worthy Master Labrique, and the oily Master Bontoux, and all the grey-beards of the worshipful company.

The young fellows used very much the same language, with some slight variations inspired by jealousy.

"We would not for the world repudiate M. L'Ambert. He is an honour to us, though no doubt, to a certain extent, compromising. In similar circumstances we should, one and all, have shown as much courage, and, perhaps, less awkwardness. A Ministerial official should never allow himself to be trampled on; but the question arises, should he be the first to put himself in the wrong?"

No one should fight a duel without legitimate reasons. Were I the father of a family I should certainly prefer to place my affairs in the hands of a prudent man—not a hero of adventures,” &c., &c.

But the opinion of the ladies, which always gives the casting vote, was in favour of the hero of Parthenay. Perhaps it might have been less unanimous had they known the episode of the cat; perhaps even that unjust, and yet so charming sex, might have sided against M. L'Ambert if he had allowed himself to appear again on the world's stage without a nose.

But the seconds had kept a discreet silence upon this ridiculous incident, and M. L'Ambert, so far from being disfigured, would seem to have gained by the change. A certain

baroness remarked that his countenance had a much more gentle expression since he took to wearing a straight nose.

An old canoness, full of spite, asked the Prince of B—— if he did not soon intend to pick a quarrel himself with the Turk, the Prince's aquiline organ enjoying a hyperbolic reputation.

It will be urged, how could women of the world interest themselves in an adventure whose risk was not incurred on their account?

M. L'Ambert's habits were well known, also how much of his time and his heart was frittered away at the opera; but the world readily forgives these little vagaries to men who do not allow themselves to be entirely engrossed by them. It gets its own share

out of the fire, and is thankful for small mercies.

It was counted unto M. L'Ambert as righteousness that he was only half good for nothing, when so many of his age are wholly so. He frequented the best houses, chatted with the dowagers, danced with the young girls, and, when required, played very passably; furthermore, his conversation was never horsey.

These merits, tolerably rare among the young millionaires of the Faubourg, gained for him the good-will of the ladies. It was even said that some of them thought they were doing a pious action by beguiling him from the pleasures of the green-room. A very pretty devotee, Mdme. De L——, managed to convince him, for the space of three

consecutive months, that the keenest pleasure is not to be found in dissipation and scandal.

For all that, he had never entirely withdrawn himself from the *corps de ballet*, and the severe lesson he had learnt did not inspire him with any horror of this hydra with a hundred pretty heads. One of his first visits was to the green-room, where Mdlle. Tompain shone in all her glory. There he made a triumphant entry; every one ran to meet him with the most friendly curiosity. What a shower of "dearest" and "dear old fellows!" what cordial shakes of the hand, what pretty little mouths pursed themselves up to receive a friendly kiss that meant nothing. He was radiant. All his fair-weather friends, all the past-masters of the freemasonry of pleasure

complimented him on his wonderful cure. During a whole *entr'acte* he reigned over this agreeable kingdom. They listened to his account of his duel, they made him relate Dr. Bernier's mode of treatment, they even admired the fineness of the stitches in the suture, which was now hardly visible.

"Just imagine," said he, "that excellent Dr. Bernier completed me with the skin of an Auvergnat. And what an Auvergnat, good Lord! The stupidest, the densest, the dirtiest in all Auvergne. No one would believe it, judging by the strips of skin he sold me. Ah! the brute made me pass many an unpleasant quarter of an hour! The street messengers are perfect swells compared to him. But at last I am rid of him, thank Heaven! The day I paid him, and turned

him adrift, I felt as if I had suddenly got rid of a heavy weight. He was called Romagné; a pretty name, forsooth! For pity's sake, never pronounce it in my presence; let no one ever speak to me of Romagné unless they wish to be the death of me—Romagné!!!

Mdlle. Tompain was among the first to congratulate our hero. Ayvaz Bey had shamefully given her up after having presented her with a sum of money four times more than she deserved. The handsome lawyer showed himself tender and forbearing towards her.

"I owe you no grudge," said he, "nor do I bear that brave Turk any ill-will. I have only one enemy in the world, and that is a fellow called Romagné."

He pronounced this word Romagné with a comic intonation that made a great hit, and,

I am told, even to this day many of the young ladies say "My Romagné" in speaking of their water carrier.

Three months passed, three lovely summer months. The weather was beautiful; few who could help it remained in Paris. The opera house was invaded by foreigners and provincials. M. L'Ambert was hardly ever seen there.

Almost every day at six o'clock, throwing off the gravity of the lawyer, he took himself off to Maison-Lafitte, where he had hired a villa. His friends came to see him there, even his lady friends. They played in the garden at all kinds of rural games, and, let me tell you, the swing was kept in perpetual motion.

One of his most assiduous and liveliest

visitors was the stockbroker, M. Steimbourg. The affair at Parthenay seemed to have drawn them more closely together. M. Steimbourg belonged to a wealthy family of converted Jews, who were worth at least two millions of money, his own share being a quarter of that large sum; he was therefore a very eligible friend. The mistresses of the two men agreed as well as might be expected, that is to say, they did not quarrel oftener than once a week! How rarely beautiful to find four hearts that beat in unison! The two men rode, read the "Figaro," or retailed the little gossip of the capital. The ladies told each other's fortunes very wittily by the cards—a miniature golden age!

M. Steimbourg made a point of presenting his friend to his family. He took him to

Bieville, where Steimbourg father had built himself a château. There M. L'Ambert was kindly received by a hale old man, a lady of fifty, who had not yet abdicated, and two very coquettish young girls. At one glance, he saw that they were not people who vegetated. No, it was a true type of a modern family in full perfection. The father and son were two companions who chaffed each other pleasantly about their little follies. The young girls had seen everything worth seeing at the theatres, and read everything that had been written. Few people knew better than they the ins and outs of Paris society. They had been shown at the Bois de Boulogne celebrated beauties of both worlds, had been taken to all the great sales, and could descant glibly upon the emeralds

of Mdlle. Z—, or the pearls of Mdlle. X—. It was Mdlle. Irma's greatest delight to copy Mme. Fargueil's toilettes—the youngest deputed a friend to find out from Mdlle. Figeae the name and address of her milliner. They were both rich, and would have large fortunes when they married. Irma pleased M. L'Ambert; he told himself that half a million of money and a woman who knew how to dress so well were not things to be sneered at, and they saw each other very frequently—nearly once a week till the first frost of November set in.

After a warm and brilliant autumn, winter came upon them like a shot. It is common enough in our climate, but M. L'Ambert's nose at this period showed an uncommon degree of sensitiveness. It began by getting rather red, then very much so, after that it

swelled till, by degrees, it became almost a deformity. After a shooting party, enlivened by a north wind, M. L'Ambert felt a perfectly unbearable irritation. He looked in the glass at the village inn, and the colour of his nose disgusted him; one might have imagined a chilblain in the wrong place.

He consoled himself, however, with the idea that a bright wood fire would soon restore the natural colour, and, luckily, the heat did soothe and eventually modify the ruddiness of the unfortunate feature. But the itching returned next day, the tissues swelled more than ever, and the redness re-appeared, with a slight addition of violet. Eight days spent at home before the fire effaced this fatal tint, but the moment he went out it returned in spite of his silver-fox coat trimmings.

This time M. L'Ambert took fright, and

sent in haste for M. Bernier. The doctor came, and declared there was a slight inflammation, and ordered a 'compress of iced water. This seemed to refresh the nose, but did not effect a cure. M. Bernier was surprised at the persistence of the evil.

"After all," said he, "Dieffenbach is perhaps right. He asserts that the flesh may die from excess of blood, and orders leeches to be applied; let us try."

The lawyer suspended a leech to the end of his nose, and when it fell off, gorged with blood, it was replaced by another, and so on during two days and two nights. The swelling and discolouration disappeared for a time, but never for very long. Something else must be tried.

M. Bernier asked for twenty-four hours' reflection, and took forty-eight.

When he returned to the house in the Rue de Verneuil he was uneasy, and even nervous. He had to constrain himself by an effort before saying—

“Medicine does not account for all natural phenomena, and I am going to submit to you a theory utterly unsupported by science. My brother practitioners would, perhaps, sneer if they heard me say that a strip detached from a man's body may still remain under the influence of its former possessor. It is your own blood, sent from your heart by the action of your brain, which, unfortunately, flies to your nose, and yet I am inclined to believe that idiotic Auvergnat has something to do with it.”

M. L'Ambert inveighed loudly. He was horrified to think that a vile mercenary, who had been well paid, and to whom they owed nothing, should be able to exercise an occult influence over the nose of any official of the Ministry. It was preposterous—an impertinence, in fact.

“It is much worse than that,” said the Doctor; “it is an absurdity, and yet I must ask your permission to send in search of Romagné. I want to see him this very day, if only to convince me that I am in error. Have you kept his address?”

“God forbid!”

“Never mind. I will try and find him out. Have patience; keep your room; you need do nothing else.”

The search lasted fifteen days. The police

then came to his assistance, and misled him for three weeks. They unearthed half-a-dozen Romagnés. A cunning, experienced agent found out all the Romagnés of Paris, excepting the one wanted. They discovered an invalid, a seller of rabbit-skins, an attorney, a thief, a draper's assistant, a policeman, and a millionaire.

M. L'Ambert ground his teeth with impatience, as he sat over the fire, and despairingly contemplated his scarlet nose.

At last they discovered the water carrier's abode, but the bird had flown. His neighbours related how he had made his fortune, and had given up his barrel to go and enjoy life.

M. Bernier invaded every public-house, and other resort of pleasure, while his patient was plunged in melancholy.

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At ten o'clock in the morning of the 2nd of February, while the lawyer was sorrowfully warming his feet, and furtively squinting at the peony which had suddenly developed itself in the centre of his face, a joyful tumult resounded through the house. Doors were opened noisily, lackeys were heard exclaiming in surprise, and the doctor appeared, leading Romagné by the hand.

It really was Romagné; but oh! how changed! Dirty, brutalised, and hideous; all light gone from his eye, stinking of wine and tobacco; red from head to foot as a boiled lobster; he looked less like a man than a living mass of erysipelas.

"Monster!" cried M. Bernier, "you ought to die of shame! You have sunk lower than the brute creation; though you

may retain the face of a man, you are no longer the colour of one. How have you employed the little fortune you got from us? You have been rolling in the lowest depths of debauchery, and I found you outside the fortifications of Paris, wallowing like a pig on the threshold of one of the filthiest of wine shops!"

The Auvergnat raised his eyes to the Doctor's face, and replied in his delightful accent, now embellished with a suburban sing-song.

"All right; I have been on the spree. Is that a reason for abusing me?"

"Who is abusing you? We are reproaching you for your iniquities, that's all. Why did you not invest your money, instead of drinking it?"

“He told me to amuse myself.”

“Scoundrel!” cried the lawyer; “do you mean to say that I advised you to go to the barrier and get drunk upon brandy and new wine?”

“One amuses oneself as one best can. I had companions.”

The Doctor sprang up with rage.

“Pretty companions they were! Here I make a cure which spreads my fame all over Paris, and which eventually would have opened for me the gates of the Institute, and you choose to go with other drunkards like yourself and spoil my divine handiwork. Were it only a question of yourself you might do what you pleased—it would be a moral and physical suicide—but who cares?—an Auvergnat more or less would make no dif-

ference to society. But unfortunately it affects a man of the world, a rich man, your benefactor, and my patient ! You have compromised, disfigured, murdered him by your misconduct ; look at the state to which you have reduced this gentleman's nose."

The poor devil eyed the nose to which he had contributed, and burst into tears.

"It is very sad, M. Bernier ; but I swear it is not my fault. The nose spoilt itself ; by jingo ! I am an honest man, and I take my oath that I never touched it !"

"Fool !" said M. L'Ambert, "you will never understand, and after all, there is no need that you should. All we want to know is, if you are resolved to turn over a new leaf, and give up this life of dissipation which is killing me by a counter blow. I warn you

that I have a long arm, and if you persist in your vicious courses I will have you put away somewhere."

"In prison?"

"Yes; in prison."

"In prison, with rogues and scoundrels? Oh! spare me, M. L'Ambert, it would be such a disgrace to my family!"

"Will you get drunk any more?—yes, or no!"

"Good heavens! How can I get drunk when I have not a farthing of money. I have spent all I had, M. L'Ambert. I have drank the whole eighty pounds, my water barrel, everything I possessed; and now no one on the face of the earth will give me credit."

"So much the better, you villain. Then there will be an end to it."

"I must be steady. There is nothing but starvation now before me, M. L'Ambert."

"I am glad to hear it."

"Oh, M. L'Ambert!"

"What?"

"If you would be so good as to buy me another water barrel to make my living, I swear to you I would become quite another creature."

"Not a bit of it. You would soon sell it for drink."

"No, M. L'Ambert, on my word, as an honest man."

"Pooh! the word of a drunkard."

"Then you are determined that I shall die of hunger and thirst! Just a hundred francs, good M. L'Ambert."

"Not a penny. Providence has brought

you to this pass for the sake of restoring my natural countenance. Drink water, eat dry bread, deprive yourself of the necessities of life, die of hunger, if you choose, since by that means I may recover my good looks, and be once more myself."

Romagné bent his head and retired with dragging steps, bowing to the company.

The lawyer was in an ecstasy of joy, and the doctor in the seventh heaven.


"I do not wish to be my own trumpeter," modestly said M. Bernier, "but Leverrier, when he discovered a planet by dint of calculation, did not work a greater miracle than I have done. To be able to guess from the appearance of your nose that an absent Auvergnat, lost in Paris, was giving himself up to all sorts of excess, surely this is tracing

effect back to a cause through paths which human boldness has never yet attempted. As to the treatment required by your illness, it is clearly pointed out by circumstances. To diet Romagné is the only remedy that can cure you, and fortune favours us bravely in having reduced this brute to his last penny. You were right to refuse him the assistance he asked, for every effort of the profession would be useless as long as this man had the means of drinking."

"But, Doctor," interrupted M. L'Ambert, "supposing this were not the cause of my illness—that you were the plaything of a fortuitous coincidence? Have you not told me yourself that theory—"

"I have said, and I maintain it, that in the present state of our science, your case admits

of no logical explanation. The reason of it remains to be proved. But the sympathy that we have discovered between the health of your nose and the conduct of this Auvergnat opens for us, possibly a delusive, but most extensive, vista. Let us wait for a few days, and if your nose improves in proportion as Romagné becomes more steady, then my theory will be strengthened by a new probability. I answer for nothing, but I foresee a physiological law, until now quite unknown to us, which I should be delighted to formulate. The scientific world is full of visible phenomena, produced by unknown causes. Why has Mdme. L—, whom we both know, a cherry imprinted on her left shoulder? Is it, as is asserted, because her mother, being in an interesting condition, took a violent



longing for a basket of cherries in Chevet's window? What invisible artist depicted this fruit on the body of a six week's old embryo, about the size of a shrimp? How can we explain this action of the mind upon the body, or tell why this cherry on Mdme. L.'s shoulder should become sensitive and painful in the month of April in each year, when cherry trees are in blossom? These are certain, evident, and palpable facts, but as inexplicable as the swelling and redness of your nose. Have patience!"

Two days after this the swelling on M. L'Ambert's nose had visibly subsided, though the redness still obstinately remained. By the end of the week it was reduced to a third in size, and after the expiration of a fortnight the skin peeled off, a new skin formed, and

the nose resumed its natural shape and colour.

The Doctor was triumphant.

“My only regret,” said he, “is that we did not keep Romagné caged up, so that we might have observed if he passed through the same changes as yourself. I am certain that for seven or eight days he has been covered with scales like a serpent.”

“Let him go to the devil,” charitably added M. L'Ambert.

From this day he resumed his former habits : rode, drove, walked, danced at all the balls of the Faubourg, and embellished, by his presence, the crush-room of the opera. All the women welcomed his return—those in good society, and those out of it. One of those who congratulated him most tenderly

on his restoration to health was the eldest sister of his friend, M. Steimbourg.

This charming person had a way of looking men straight in the face, and she soon discovered that M. L'Ambert had emerged from this last crisis handsomer than ever. Yes, really it seemed as if these two or three months of suffering had added something hitherto wanting to his expression. His nose especially; that straight nose, which had resumed its pristine form after such an agonising extension, seemed more refined, whiter, and more aristocratic than ever.

This was also the opinion of the handsome lawyer, and he gazed at himself in all the looking glasses, with an ever increasing admiration; it was very amusing to see him face to face with himself, smiling at his own nose.

But at the beginning of spring, about the middle of March, when the generous sap was swelling the budding shoots of the lilac trees, M. L'Ambert began to think that his nose alone was deprived of the benefits of the season, and the blessings of Nature. In the midst of the general regeneration it withered and paled like an autumn leaf—the thin nostrils, as if dried up by an invisible sirocco, flattened themselves against the cartilage.

“Zounds,” said the lawyer, making a grimace in the glass. “Refinement, like virtue, is a good thing, but one can have too much of it. My nose is assuming an alarming elegance, and soon there will be only the shadow of it left, unless I can restore its life and colour ! ”

He tried a little rouge, but this only threw

out into greater relief the straight, thin line which divided his face in two ; exactly like the blade of fine steel, which raises its thin and sharp outline on a sun-dial, was this fantastic nose of the unfortunate lawyer.

In vain did the wealthy owner of the house in the Rue de Verneuil try a more substantial regimen, thinking that good food, digested by a sound stomach, would have the same beneficial effect on every part of his body. He made himself take strong soups, strong jelly, and quantities of underdone meat, washed down with the most generous wines. To say that these choice viands were of no good at all, would be to deny the evidence of one's senses, and to speak disparagingly of good cheer. M. L'Ambert, in a very short time, had a grand pair of red cheeks, a massive

throat like an apoplectic bull, and a decided bow-window. But his nose was like a neglected partner, too careless or too disinterested to claim his dividends.

When a patient is too ill to eat or drink, he is sometimes sustained by nourishing baths, which penetrate through the pores to the sources of life. M. L'Ambert treated his nose like an invalid who requires a special regimen at any cost. He ordered for its sole use a little silver bath, six times a day; he immersed and kept it patiently in baths, either of milk, Burgundy, broth, and even tomato sauce.

All labour lost, the invalid came out of them as white, as thin, as deplorable as he had gone in.

All hope seemed lost, when one day M. Bernier, striking his forehead, exclaimed—

“ We have committed a tremendous fault, a regular school boy's blunder, and it is I who have done it at the very moment when my theory had received such a startling confirmation. There can be no doubt about it, the Auvergnat is ill, and it is he whom we must treat to cure you.”

Poor M. L'Ambert tore his hair. Now, indeed, he regretted that he had turned Romagné out of doors, and refused him assistance ; above all, that he had forgotten to ask his address. He pictured to himself the poor devil lying sick on a miserable bed without bread, without roast beef, and with no Château Margot. At this thought, his heart was touched, he identified himself with the sufferings of the poor hireling, and for the first time in his life he felt some compassion for a fallen creature.

“ Doctor, dear doctor,” he exclaimed, pressing M. Bernier’s hand, “I would give all I possess to save that poor young man !”

Five days later, the evil had increased, the nose was nothing but a flexible atom, bending beneath the weight of his spectacles, when M. Bernier came to say he had discovered the Auvergnat.

“ Victory,” cried M. L’Ambert.

The Doctor shrugged his shoulders, and replied “ that the victory at that moment seemed to him very doubtful.”

“ My theory,” said he, “ is fully confirmed, and in my capacity of physiologist, I ought to be satisfied, but as your doctor, I am anxious to cure you, and the state in which I have found that unfortunate gives me little or no hope.”

“ But you will save him, dear Doctor ? ”

“ To begin with, he no longer belongs to me, he is now the property of a fellow practitioner, who is studying his case with the greatest curiosity.”

“ But he can be handed over to you ; we will even buy him if necessary.”

“ Of what are you dreaming ? A doctor does not sell his patients : he kills them sometimes in the interests of science, to see what their bodies will disclose, but to make it a trading matter, oh, never ! My friend Fogatier may perhaps give me your Auvergnat, but the rascal is very ill, and to crown all, he has taken such a disgust to life that he will not try to get well ; he throws away all his medicines. With regard to his food, sometimes he complains he has not enough,

at others he refuses what is given him, and asks to be allowed to die."

"But that is a crime. I will speak to him, I will make him listen to the language of morality and religion. Where is he?"

"At the Hotel Dieu, ward St. Paul, No. 10."

"Have you your carriage below?"

"Yes."

"Very well, let us go; what a scoundrel to wish to die; he is not then aware that all men are brothers!"





CHAPTER VI.

THE HISTORY OF A PAIR OF SPECTACLES
AND THE
CONSEQUENCES OF A COLD IN THE HEAD.

NEVER did preacher in this world, Bossuet, Fenelon, Massillon or Fléchier—never even did M. Mermilliod himself—pour forth from the pulpit more powerful or more persuasive eloquence, than that expended by M. L'Ambert at the bedside of Romagné. First he appealed to the reason, then to the conscience, and last of all to the heart of his patient; he had recourse to arguments, both

sacred and profane, quoted texts alike from the Bible and philosophers, was powerful and gentle, severe and fatherly, logical, coaxing, nay even at times jocose. He proved to him that suicide is the most disgraceful of all crimes, and that one must be very cowardly to kill oneself intentionally. He even tried a metaphor, as original as it was bold, comparing a self-murderer to the deserter who abandons his post, without permission from his commanding officer.

The Auvergnat, who had taken nothing for twenty-four hours, appeared wedded to his idea. He remained as immovable and obstinate in the face of death, as an ass standing before a bridge. To the most pressing arguments, he replied with a gentle impassibility—

“ Oh, it's not worth while, M. L'Ambert ; there is so much poverty in the world.”

“ But my friend, my poor friend, poverty is an institution direct from Heaven. It is permitted, in order to teach charity to the rich, and resignation to the poor.”

“ The rich ; I tried to get work and every one refused it to me ; I asked for charity, and was threatened with the police.”

“ Why did you not seek out your friends ? myself for instance, I who always wish to do you good, I who have your blood in my veins ? ”

“ Very likely, for you to have me kicked out of doors again !”

“ My door shall always be open to you, my purse, and my heart likewise.”

“ Oh, if you had only given those fifty

francs, when I wanted to buy a second-hand barrel."

"But you beast—beloved beast I mean—I may be allowed to speak a little roughly, as I used to do when you shared my bed and board. It is not only fifty francs that I would give you, but a thousand, two thousand, ten thousand, it is my whole fortune I wish to share with you—in proportion to our respective wants. You must live, you must be happy : here is the spring returning with its accompanying pageant of flowers, and the soft warbling of the birds in the trees. Can you have the heart to leave all this behind ? Think of the sorrow of your poor relations, of your old father, living in the hopes of seeing you once more in your native country, of your brothers and sisters ; think of your

mother, my friend, who would never survive your loss ! You shall see them all again, or rather, on second thoughts, you must remain in Paris under my own eye, within my reach. I must see to your happiness, you shall marry a nice little wife, and be the father of two or three fine handsome children ; ah, you smile ! Take this soup."

"Many thanks, M. L'Ambert ; keep the soup, I shall not want any again, there is too much misery in the world."

"But when I tell you that your days of poverty are at an end, I take upon myself to insure your future, on my honour as a lawyer. If you will only consent to live, you shall suffer no more, you shall work no more, your year shall consist of three hundred and sixty-five Sundays."

“What, and no Mondays?”

“Of Mondays, if you prefer them; you shall eat, drink, and smoke cabanos, worth thirty sous a piece! You shall be my guest, my inseparable companion—a second myself in fact. Will you live for that, Romagné?”

“No; so much the worse! As I have begun to die, I may as well finish at once.”

“Oh, is that it? well then, I will tell you, triple distilled beast that you are, to what a destiny you are hastening. It is not only a question of eternal punishment that your obstinacy is bringing nearer and nearer to you, but in this world, here even, to-morrow—nay, perhaps to-day—before being left to rot in the pauper’s grave, you will be carried to some dissecting-room, where they will

throw your body on a marble table, and cut it up into pieces. One Sawbones will split your mule's head with an axe, another will pierce your chest with repeated strokes of the scalpel, to find out if there be a heart inside this stupid covering ; another—"

"Have pity ! oh, have pity, M. L'Ambert. I do not wish to be cut in pieces, I would rather take the soup !"

Three days of soup and his naturally strong constitution saved Romagné from his very ticklish position. He was then able to be conveyed, in a carriage, to the Rue de Verneuil, where M. L'Ambert himself assisted at his installation with almost maternal solicitude. He gave up to him the room of his own valet so that he might be nearer himself. During a month he performed all

the functions of a sick nurse, even sitting up for several nights.

This fatigue, instead of impairing his health, seemed to restore the freshness and beauty of his complexion. The more he exerted himself to nurse the poor devil, the healthier and handsomer his nose became. His time was divided between the office, the Auvergnat, and the looking glass. It was about this time, that he wrote one day in a fit of abstraction, on the rough copy of an act of sale—"how sweet it is to do good!" a saying rather old in itself, but apparently new to him.

When Romagné was decidedly convalescent, his host and his preserver, who had cut so many sippets of bread, and carved so many beefsteaks for him, said—

“ From this day forth we will dine together every day, but if you think you would prefer your meals in the servants’ hall, you will be just as well fed, and perhaps more amused.”

Romagné, like a sensible man, decided in favour of the servants’ hall. He fell in with their ways, and the manner in which he conducted himself there won all hearts. Instead of boasting of the friendliness of the master, no little scullion was more modest or gentle. M. L’Ambert had simply given his servants some one to wait on them : every one made use of him, laughed at his peculiar accent, and gave him friendly nudges, but no one thought of paying his wages. M. L’Ambert often found him carrying water, moving heavy pieces of furniture, or polishing the floors ;

on such occasions this good master used to take him by the ear, saying—

“Amuse yourself if you will, but don’t over fatigue yourself.”

At this the poor fellow, overwhelmed with so much kindness, would retire to his room to weep tears of gratitude.

He was not able to keep this nice clean room close to M. L’Ambert very long ; his master hinted to him very delicately one day how much he missed his valet ; and Romagné at once asked to be allowed to occupy a room in the garrets !

His request was granted, and he was given a sort of dog-hole, which hitherto no kitchenmaid had ever been induced to occupy.

Some wise man has said, “happy the

people without a history." Sebastian Romagné was happy for three months. At the beginning of June, he had a history—his heart, so long invulnerable, was attacked by Cupid's darts. The *ci-devant* water carrier gave himself up hand and foot to the god who lost Troy. While peeling vegetables in the kitchen, he became aware that the cook had handsome little grey eyes, and great red cheeks. A sigh, heavy enough to upset the tables, was the first symptom of the attack. He tried to explain himself, but the words died away in his throat; he hardly dared take his Dulcinea by the waist, and imprint an impassioned kiss upon her lips, so great was his timidity.

At the first word the cook understood him; she was a capable person, seven or eight

years older than himself, and better versed in the art of love.

"I see what it is," said she, "you wish to marry me; very well, my lad, we can come to terms, I dare say, provided you possess everything that is necessary for a husband."

He replied naïvely enough, that he had every requisite, that is to say, a pair of strong arms well accustomed to work, but Miss Jenny laughed in his face, and spoke out more clearly; bursting with laughter, in his turn, he replied—

"If you mean money, why did you not say so at once? I have any amount, only say how much you want, name the sum—would half of M. L'Ambert's fortune be enough?"

"The half of master's fortune!"

“Certainly, he has told me scores of times I am to have the half of his fortune, but we have not yet made the division; he is keeping my share.”

“Rubbish ! ”

“Rubbish ! look, here he comes ; I will go and ask him for my due, and will bring the bag of coppers into the kitchen.”

Poor innocent ! he received from his master a good lesson in high social grammar. M. L'Ambert soon taught him that to promise and perform are not synonymous terms . He also condescended to explain to him (for he happened to be in very good humour) the merits of the figure of speech called hyperbole. At last he said to him, with a gentle firmness that admitted of no reply—

“Romagné, I have done a great deal for

you ; I will do still more. I will send you away from this house. Your own good sense must tell you that you cannot be master here, and I am too kind to let you stay on as a servant. I think I should be doing you an injustice were I to allow you to remain in an indefinite position, which would upset your usual habits, and mislead your ideas. Another year of this idle life of a parasite would make you lose all taste for work, and you would fall out of your sphere ; and, I must tell you, the unclassed are the scourge of our day. Lay your hand upon your heart, and tell me honestly, could you ever consent to become a pest to society ? Poor miserable creature, have you not already, and more than once, regretted that title of workman, your patent of nobility ? For you are one of those created

by God to be ennobled by your own hard work ; you belong to the aristocracy of labour. Work then, not as formerly, in the midst of privation and uncertainty, but in a security that I will guarantee you, and an abundance proportionate to your modest wants. I will pay all the expenses of the first outlay, and will procure you work. If, by any chance, the means of subsistence should fail, you will find resources at my house. But give up this insane idea of marrying my cook ; you ought not to link your fate with a servant, and, for my part, I will have no children about the house ! ”

The unfortunate man cried his eyes out, but expressed his grateful thanks. To give M. L'Ambert his due, he did the thing fairly well. Romagné was rigged out in everything

new. A room on the fifth storey was furnished for him in an old house in the Rue du Cherchemidi, and five hundred francs given him to live upon until work could be found. Before eight days were over, he got a place in a celebrated looking glass warehouse in the Rue de Sèvres.

Nearly six months passed, and during this time the lawyer's nose never once reminded him of its provider. But one day when this ministerial servant, in company with his head clerk, was deciphering some parchments belonging to an old and noble family, his gold spectacles broke in two, and fell upon the table.

This little accident did not disturb him much. He took a *pincenez*, with steel springs, and sent his spectacles to be changed on the

Quai d'Orfèvres. M. Luna, his optician in ordinary, hastened to send a thousand apologies with a pair of new spectacles, which, in the course of twenty-four hours, broke in exactly the same place as the others. A third pair shared the same fate, and a fourth broke in precisely the same way. The optician, at his wits' ends, knew not what further excuse to make. At the bottom of his heart, he was convinced that M. L'Ambert was to blame. He said to his wife, showing her the mischief of the previous four days—

“This young man is not reasonable, he wears glasses No. 4, which are necessarily very heavy ; but from dandyism, he insists on their setting being as fine as wire, and I feel sure he uses his spectacles as roughly as if they were made of cast iron. If I tell him

he will be angry, but I mean to send him something rather stronger in the framework.”

Madam Luna thought this an excellent idea, but for all that the fifth pair of spectacles were as unlucky as the other four. This time M. L'Ambert did get angry, though no observation had been made, and he transferred his custom to a rival house.

But one would have imagined that all the opticians in Paris were determined that their glasses should break on the nose of the unfortunate lawyer. At least a dozen pairs were tried, and the most extraordinary thing of all was that the *pincenez* with steel springs, which always came into play during each interregnum, remained as firm and strong as ever.

We know that patience was not a favourite

virtue of M. L'Ambert. One day he stamped on a pair of spectacles, and was crushing them under his feet, when M. Bernier was announced.

"By Jove!" said the lawyer, "you have come in the nick of time. I am bewitched; the devil take me."

The Doctor's eye, naturally enough, fell at once on the nose of his patient; it looked healthy, in good condition, and fresh as a rose.

"It seems to me," said he, "that we are doing very well."

"I—no doubt, but these confounded spectacles won't do at all."

Thereupon he related his adventures, and M. Bernier became more and more serious.

"The Auvergnat is mixed up in this; have you a broken framework by you?"

"Here is one under my feet."

M. Bernier picked it up, and after having examined it through a microscope, he fancied he saw that the gold looked as if silvered at the broken edges.

"The devil!" said he, "has Romagné been at his old tricks again?"

"What tricks do you mean?"

"Is he still under your roof?"

"No, the rascal has left; he is at work in town."

"I hope this time you have taken his address?"

"Naturally; do you wish to see him?"

"The sooner the better."

"There is, then, some danger pending? nevertheless, I am very well."

"First of all let us go and find Romagné."

A quarter of an hour after, these gentlemen alighted at the door of Messrs. Taillade and Co., Rue de Sèvres. A grand sign of cut glass indicated the sort of work carried on within.

"Here we are," said the lawyer.

"What! your man is employed here?"

"Most certainly; I got him in myself."

"All right, there is less harm done than I thought; but all the same, you have been guilty of a great imprudence."

"What do you mean?"

"First, let us go in."

The first person they saw on entering the workshop was the Auvergnat with his shirt sleeves rolled up, silvering a mirror.

"Ah!" said the Doctor, "I guessed rightly."

“What, Doctor?”

“They silver mirrors with a layer of mercury, confined under a leaf of tin; do you understand?”

“Not yet.”

“That animal of yours is covered with it up to his elbows—what am I saying?—up to his armpits would be near the mark.”

“Still, I do not see the connection.”

“You can't see that your nose, being a portion of his arm, and gold having a deplorable tendency always to amalgamate with mercury, it would always be impossible for you to preserve your spectacles.”

“By Jove!”

“But you have still the alternative of wearing steel spectacles.”

“I don't like them.”

“ Well, after all, you incur no risk, except, perhaps, a few mercurial accidents.”

“ Not at all. I would rather Romagné did something else. Here, Romagné ! leave your work, and come away quickly with us ! Will you leave off, you brute ? You don't know the danger to which you expose me ! ”

The master of the shop had been drawn to the spot by the noise.

M. L'Ambert announced himself with an air of importance, and reminded him that he had himself recommended this man through his upholsterer.

M. Taillade replied that he remembered the circumstance perfectly ; it was to make himself agreeable to M. L'Ambert, and to win his patronage, that he had promoted his porter to the rank of silverer.

“During the last fortnight?” exclaimed M. L'Ambert.

“Yes, sir; did you already know it?”

“I know it only too well. Oh, sir, how can one trifle with things so sacred?”

“I have—”

“No, nothing. But out of regard for me—for yourself—for society in general—put him back again where he was; or rather no, give him back to me, and let me take him away. I will pay all that is necessary; but let there be no delay. It is the doctor's orders. Romagné, my friend, follow me; your fortune is made; everything I have is yours! Not that exactly, but come all the same. You shall have every reason to be satisfied with me.”

He hardly gave Romagné time to clothe himself, and dragged him off like a prize.

M. Taillade and his workmen thought him mad. The poor victim raised his eyes to heaven, and as they walked along wondered what they wanted of him now.

His future was discussed in the carriage, while he sat open-mouthed by the side of the coachman.

“My dear patient,” said the Doctor to the millionaire, “you must never lose sight of that lad. I can quite understand your sending him out of your house, for he is not the most agreeable inmate in the world; but you should not have allowed him to go so far, nor have remained so long without news of him. Let him lodge in the Rue de Beaume, or the Rue de l’Université, close to your house. Give him an occupation less dangerous to yourself, or rather, if you would act for the best, give

him a little pension, and let him do nothing. If he works he will fatigue and expose himself. Indeed I don't know of any trade where a man does not run some risk, an accident happens so easily. Give him enough to live upon without having to work; but be careful not to give him too much; he would only drink again, and you know what would happen to you. A hundred francs a month, and his rent paid; that is all he requires."

"It is, perhaps, too much. Not on account of the money; but I wish him to have only enough to buy food; nothing for drink."

"Well, then, give him four louis, payable every Tuesday in each week."

They offered Romagné a pension of eighty-four francs a month; but for once he was obstinate.

“All that!” said he, scornfully. “It is hardly worth while to take me from the Rue de Sèvres. I had three francs ten sous a day, and I was able to send money to my family. Let me work at the mirrors again, or give me three francs ten sous.”

And they were obliged to give it to him, seeing he was master of the situation.

M. L'Ambert soon found out that he had taken a wise step. A year passed over without an accident of any kind.

Romagné was paid every week, and under daily surveillance. He lived honestly and quietly, without any passion except for a game at nine-pins. And Mdle. Irma Steimbourg's handsome eyes rested with a visible complacency upon the pink and white nose of the happy millionaire.

These two young people danced every cotillion together all through the winter, and people began to talk and say it would be a match.

One night, on leaving the opera house, the old Marquis de Villemaurin stopped M. L'Ambert under the portico.

"Well," said he, "when is the wedding to come off?"

"But, Marquis, I have heard nothing about it yet."

"What, are you waiting till they ask you in marriage? By Jove, it's the man's place to speak first. The little Duke de Lignaut, a real gentleman and a right good fellow, did not wait till I offered him my daughter. He came, he gave satisfaction, and everything was settled; in eight days we

sign the marriage contract. You understand, my dear fellow, this is your affair. Just wait till I see these ladies into their carriage, and then we can walk together to the Club. But put on your hat, I beg of you. I did not notice you were uncovered. It is enough to give you your death of cold."

The old man and the young one walked side by side as far as the Boulevard, one talking, the other listening. And M. L'Ambert went home to draw up from memory the marriage contract of Mdlle. Charlotte Auguste de Villemaurin; but in the meantime, there was no denying, he had caught a very severe cold. The deed was minuted by the head clerk, looked over by the respective lawyers of the betrothed parties, and finally copied

out on stamped paper, nothing more being needed but the signatures.

On the day appointed, M. L'Ambert, a slave to duty, took himself to the Hotel de Villemaurin, notwithstanding a catarrh that made his eyes start out of his head.

For the last time he blew his nose in the ante-chamber, and the lackeys all started off their seats as if they had heard the trump of the last judgment.

M. L'Ambert was announced. He wore his gold spectacles, smiling gravely, as became the situation.

With well-tied cravat, well-gloved hands, his feet clad in thin dancing boots, his hat under his arm, the contract in his right hand, he advanced to pay his respects to the Marchioness; and entering the circle which surrounded her, bent before her, saying—

“Marshunness, I bring the marriage contract of your young lady.”

Madame de Villemaurin lifted two large, astonished eyes, to his face, while a slight murmur ran through the assembly.

M. L'Ambert bowed again, exclaiming—

“By jingo, Marshunness, this will be a fine thing for the young woman !”

A vigorous hand seized him by the left arm and turned him round with a pirouette. At this moment he recognised the Marquis.

“My dear lawyer,” said the old man, dragging him into a corner, “this carnival time permits many a licence ; but you should remember where you are, and change your tone, I beg of you.”

“But, Marquish.”

“What, again ! You see I am patient, but don't carry it any further ; go and make your

excuses to the Marchioness, read us over the contract, and say good-night."

"But why excushes, and why good-night? One would imagine I had done something not correct."

The Marquis said no more, but made a sign to one of the footmen going through the drawing-room, upon which the door opened, and a voice in the ante-chamber was heard calling out—

"M. L'Ambert's servants."

Giddy, confused, beside himself, the poor millionaire bowed himself out, eventually finding himself in his carriage, without in the least knowing how or why. He struck his forehead, tore his hair, pinched his arms, to make sure he was awake, fancying he must be the victim of some nightmare. But no,

he was not asleep; he saw the time by his watch; he read the names of the streets by the gas light; he recognised the different signs of the shops. What had he said?—what had he done? What rules of decorum had he violated?—what awkwardness, what folly—had he committed to bring this treatment upon himself? for one thing was quite certain, he had been turned out of M. de Villemaurin's house. The marriage contract was there in his hand; that contract drawn up with so much care, in such good style, and which they had not even heard read!

He found himself in his own courtyard, without having arrived at a solution of the problem. The sight of his porter inspired him with a bright idea.

“Shinguet,” said he.

Then little Singuet made haste to come forward.

"Shinguet, I will give you a hundred francs if you will shincerely tell me the truth, and a hundred kicks on your carcash if you consheal anything from me."

Singuet looked at him with surprise, and smiled timidly.

"You shmile, hard-hearted wretch! Why do you shmile? Tell me at once."

"Really, sir," said the poor devil, "I hardly dare, Monsieur must excuse me, but Monsieur does imitate Romagné's accent to a T."

"Romagné's acshent! I—I speak like Romagné—like an Auvergnat!"

"Monsieur knows that very well. It is now eight days since it began."

"No—dash me, I don't know it!"

Singuet raised his eyes to Heaven; he thought his master had gone mad. But M. L'Ambert, apart from this confounded accent, was in full possession of his faculties. He questioned his servants, one after the other, and at last became convinced of his misfortune.

"Ah, that rashcal of a water carrier," cried he. "I am shure he has been up to shome of his trickshs; let him be found, or rather—no, I will go myshelf, and give him a good shaking."

He ran on foot to his pensioner's house, climbed up the five storeys, knocked, but did not awaken him, and in a frenzy of rage and impatience, burst open the door.

"Mishter L'Ambert," cried Romagné.

"Schoundrel of an Auvergnat," answered the lawyer.

“Dash it!”

“Dash it!”

They both seemed to be of one mind in murdering the French language; their discussion lasted a good quarter of an hour, in the purest of gibberish, without in the least clearing up the mystery. One complained bitterly as a victim, the other defended himself with all the eloquence of an innocent man.

“Wait for me here,” said M. L'Ambert, in conclusion. “M. Bernier, the doctor, will tell me this very night what you have been doing.”

He woke up M. Bernier, and related to him, as we know them, the events of the evening. The Doctor began to laugh.

“Much ado about nothing; Romagné is

innocent, and you have only yourself to blame. You stood bareheaded outside the Opera House, and all the evil has arisen from that. You have caught a cold; that makes you speak through your nose. Consequently you talk like an Auvergnat; that's logic. Go home, inhale some aconite, keep your feet warm, cover your head, and take every precaution against this influenza, for now you know how much hangs upon your nose."

The unhappy man returned to his house, grumbling like the very devil.

"Sho," said he, aloud, "all my precaushions go for nothing. In vain I lodge, feed, and watch thish water carrier; he will always be playing me shome trickshs, and I shall conshantly be his victim, without being able to accushe him. What ushe is all this expenshe;

upon my word, sho much the worshe, I shall at least shave the penshfon !”

No sooner said than done; next day, when poor Romagné, still bewildered, came to receive his week's allowance, Singuet shut the door upon him, telling him he was no longer wanted there. He philosophically shrugged his shoulders like a man, who not having read Horace's letters, still by instinct practises the *nil admirari*. Singuet, who retained an interest in him, asked what he intended doing. He replied that he should look out for work with all the more pleasure, as this enforced idleness had weighed heavily upon him for some time past.

M. L'Ambert got well of his influenza, and congratulated himself upon having effaced from his budget the article Romagné.

No further accident happened to interrupt his happiness; he made his peace with the Marquis de Villemaurin, and with his clients of the Faubourg, who had all been more or less scandalized. Free from all anxiety, he was able to give himself up unrestrainedly to the tender passion inspired by Mdle. Steimbourg's large fortune. Happy L'Ambert! he opened wide the door of his heart and displayed the chaste and honest sentiments it contained. The lovely and knowing young girl gave her hand, English fashion, and said—

“It is a settled thing, my parents agree with me. I will give you all necessary instructions for my *corbeille*. Let us try to shorten all formalities so as to be able to go to Italy before the end of the winter.”

Love lent him wings: he bought the

corbeille without any bargaining, put the apartments destined for Madame into the hands of his upholsterer, ordered a new carriage, chose a pair of thorough-breds of exquisite beauty, and hastened the publication of the banns. The farewell dinner he gave his friends is inscribed in the archives of the Café Anglais. His favourites received his adieux and his bracelets with restrained emotion.

Letters of ceremony announced that the nuptial benediction would be given at St. Thomas d'Aquin, on the 3rd of March, at one o'clock precisely. Is it necessary to add, that they had the high altar and all the paraphernalia of a first-class marriage? On the 3rd of March, at eight o'clock, M. L'Ambert awoke without being called, smiled at the first beams of a bright sunshine, took

his handkerchief from under his pillow, and raised it to his nose, with a view of clearing his ideas, but his nose was no longer there, and the cambric pocket handkerchief descended upon vacancy !

With one bound, the lawyer found himself before the looking glass. Horror and malediction (as they say in the romances of the old school) ! he saw himself in the same mutilated condition as when he first returned from Parthenay. To run to his bed, search among the sheets and blankets, explore the bedstead, examine the mattress and bolster, shake the neighbouring furniture, and upset everything in the room, was, as you may suppose, the affair of a few seconds.

“ Nothing ! nothing ! nothing ! ”

He hung on to the bell rope, called all his servants to the rescue, and threatened to turn

them all out, if the nose was not found. Useless threat ! the nose was as difficult to find as the Legislative Assembly of 1316.

Two hours passed thus in agitation, disorder, and noise. Steimbourg, the father, had already put on his blue coat with brass buttons ; Mdlle. Steimbourg, resplendent in a wedding garment, superintended the movements of two ladies' maids, and three dress-makers, who flitted about the lovely Irma. The fair bride, covered with rice powder, like a gudgeon ready for frying, stamped about in great impatience, abusing every one with admirable impartiality. The mayor of the parish, girt with his official scarf, walked up and down the large empty hall, preparing his speech. The privileged beggars of St. Thomas d'Aquin occupied themselves in chasing away some intruders, come from

heaven knows where, to dispute the spoils with them. M. Henry Steimbourg, who had been grinding at a cigar for the last half hour in his father's study, began to wonder at the non-arrival of his friend M. L'Ambert.

At last, losing all patience, he ran to the Rue de Sartines, and there found his future brother-in-law, bathed in tears! What could he say to console him under such a misfortune? He walked several times round and round him, repeating "by Jove!"

He made him relate twice over the fatal catastrophe, and interspersed some philosophical remarks on his own part.

That confounded doctor was not yet forthcoming though they had sent to say the case was urgent, sent to his home, to the hospitals and everywhere. At last, however, he ar-

rived, and at once jumped to a conclusion that Romagné must be dead.

"I thought as much," said the lawyer, whose tears redoubled, "rascally brute of a Romagné." This was the funeral oration of the poor Auvergnat!

"And now, Doctor, what is to be done?"

"We can find another Romagné, and begin the whole thing over again, but you know by experience the disadvantages of that system, and if you will be advised by me, you will try the Indian method this time."

"What, the skin of my forehead? never, a silver nose would be better than that."

"They make very elegant ones now-a-days," said the Doctor.

"It remains to be seen if Mdlle. Irma Steimbouurg will consent to marry an invalid

with a silver nose. Henry, my good fellow, what do you say ?”

Henry Steimbourg shook his head, and said nothing. He would carry the news to his family, and learn the young lady's wishes. That amiable person behaved like a heroine, when she learnt the misfortune of her betrothed.

“Do you think,” said she, that I am marrying him only for his beauty ? at that rate I should have taken my cousin Rodrigo, Master in the Court of Appeal. Rodrigo was not so rich, but much handsomer ! I gave my hand to M. L'Ambert, because he was a gentleman of good position—because his character, his house, his horses, his mind, his dress, everything, in fact about him pleased me ; besides here I am dressed for the occasion ; if my marriage falls through, I shall

lose my reputation. Let us hasten to his house, mother. I will take him as he is."

But when she found herself face to face with the disfigured object, this grand enthusiasm quickly died out, and she fainted. They soon brought her round, but only to burst into tears; in the midst of her sobs, they heard a cry which seemed to come from the depths of her soul—

"Oh, Rodrigo," cried she, "I have been very unjust to you."

M. L'Ambert remained a bachelor, he had a silver nose made, and resigned his office to his head clerk. There was a very pretty little house for sale near the Invalides, and he bought it. Many of his friends and boon companions enlivened his solitude; he had a famous cellar, and consoled himself as best he might. The finest bottles of Chateau-

Yquem, the best vintages of Clos Vougeot are his ; sometimes he says jestingly—

“ I have a privilege over other men, I can drink as much as I please without fear of making my nose red.”

He has remained faithful to his politics, reads all the good papers, and makes earnest prayers for the success of Chiavone, but does not send him any money. The pleasure of accumulating money procures him a kind of gentle intoxication. His life is spent between two wines and two millions.

One evening of last week, as he was walking slowly, stick in hand along the foot path of the Rue Eblé, he uttered a cry of surprise. Romagné's ghost, dressed in blue corduroy, stood before him !

Was it really a ghost ? Ghosts carry nothing, and this one carried a trunk upon his back.

“Romagné,” cried the lawyer.

“Good night, Mister L’Ambert.”

“You speak, then ; you are alive ?”

“Certainly, I am alive.”

“Miserable wretch, what have you done with my nose ?”

While speaking he had seized him by the collar, and was shaking him with all his might. The Auvergnat released himself with some difficulty, and said—

“Let me alone, I can’t defend myself, don’t you, I have lost an arm ? When you stopped my allowance, I went into a factory, and got my arm crushed in the machinery !

THE END.

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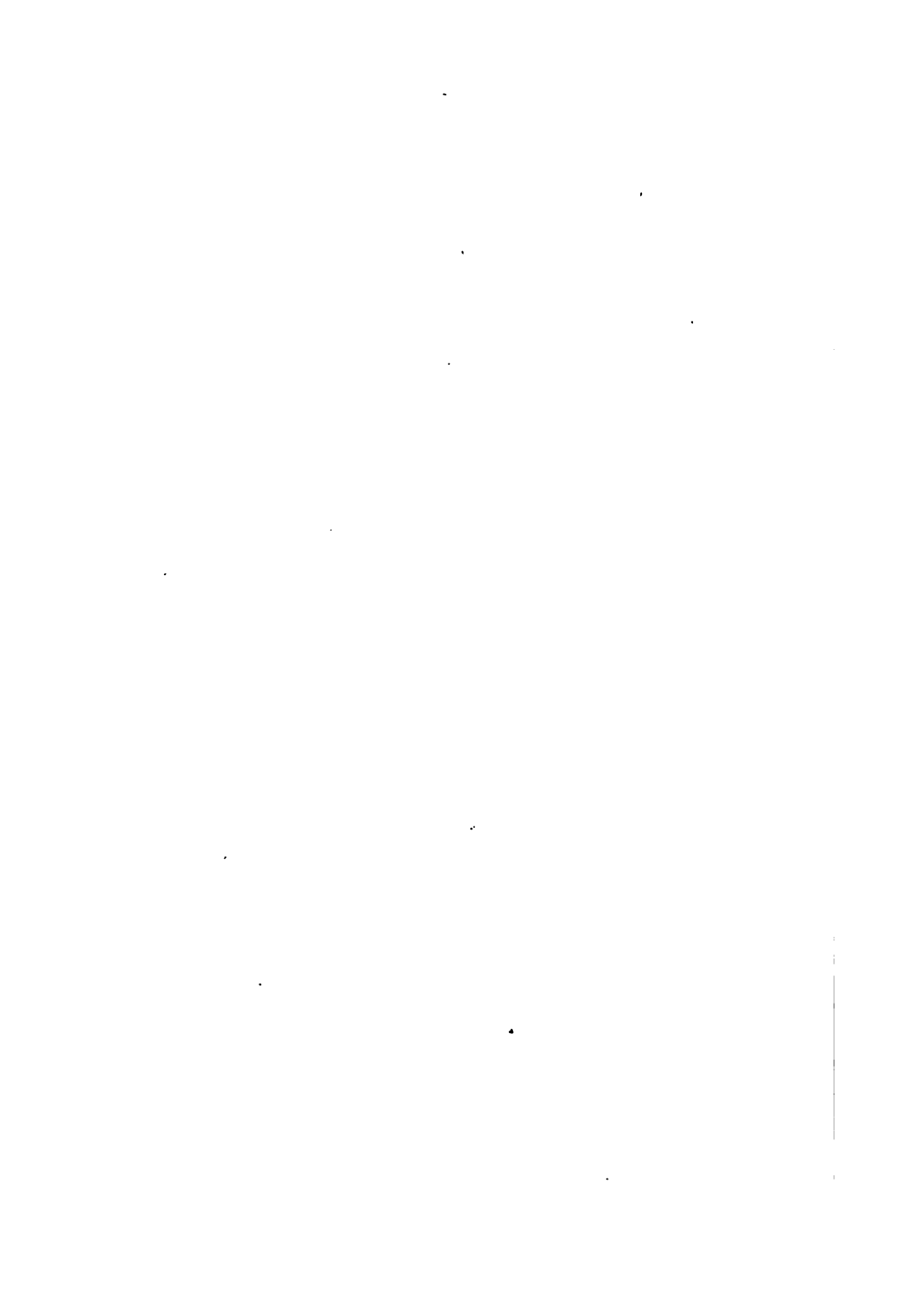
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